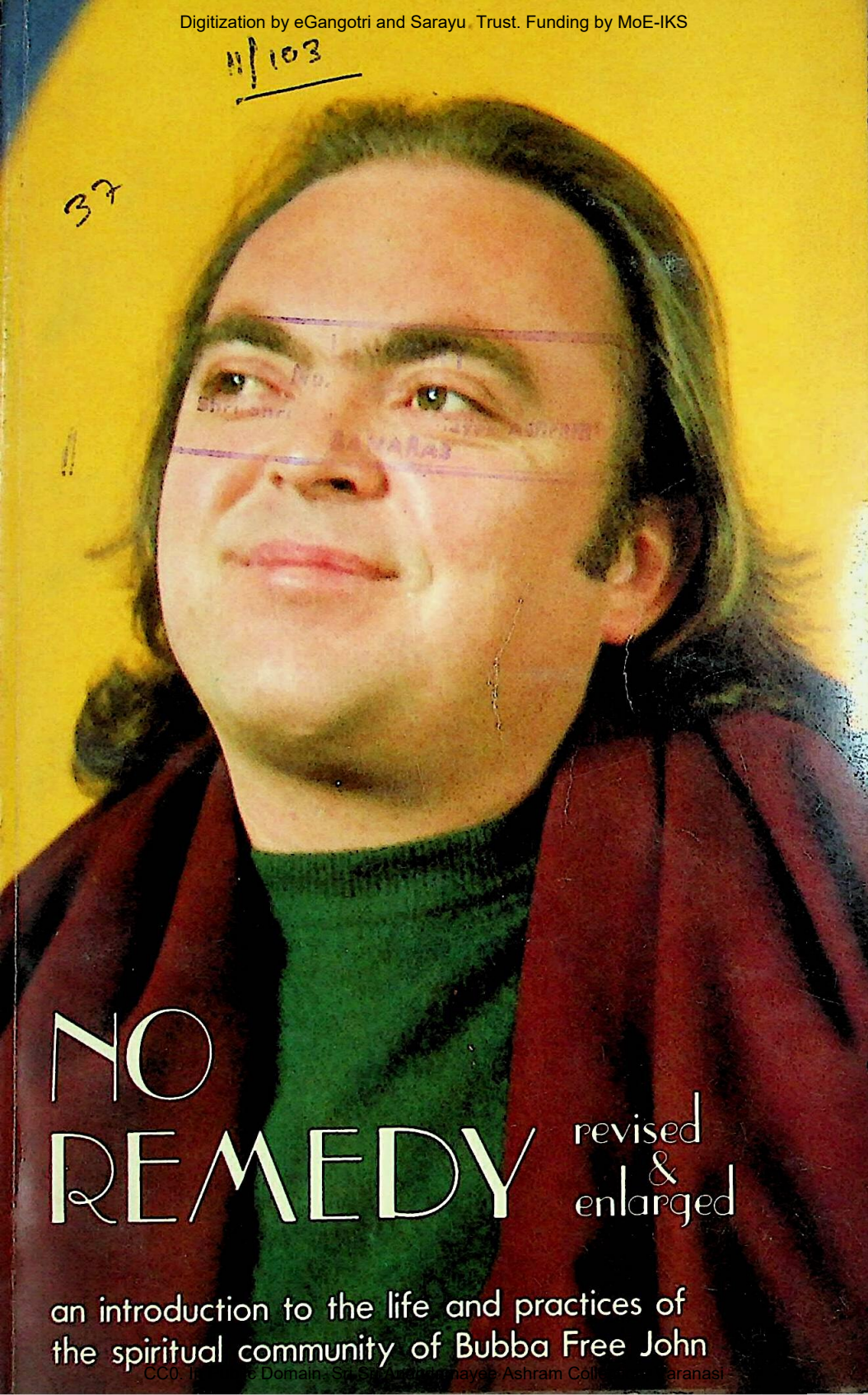
Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

II/103

37



NO REMEDY

revised & enlarged

an introduction to the life and practices of the spiritual community of Bubba Free John

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

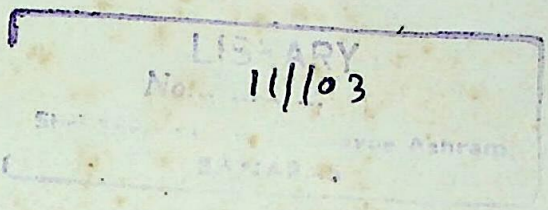
Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Library
SHREE SHREE MA ANANDAMAYEE ASHRAM
Bhadaini, Varanasi-1
No. 11103
Books should be returned by date (last) noted below or re-issue arranged. Otherwise a fine of -/10/- N. P. daily shall have to be paid.

20-1-78

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



NO REMEDY

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC0 In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

NO REMEDY

revised & enlarged

An Introduction to the Life and Practices of the Spiritual Community of Bubba Free John

Compiled and Edited by Members of
The Dawn Horse Communion
In Collaboration with
Bubba Free John

THE DAWN HORSE PRESS
LOWER LAKE, CALIFORNIA

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Copyright © 1975, 1976
by The Dawn Horse Communion

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. The first edition published June 1975. Revised February 1976.

The Dawn Horse Press
P. O. Box 677
Lower Lake, California 95457

Revised Edition

International Standard Book Number: 0-913922-20-X
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 75-21551

Printed in the United States of America

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

LIBRARY
No. 11/103
Sri Anandamayee Ashram
BARAS

CONTENTS

vii Introduction

1 PART ONE: LIVE WITH ME

5 *The Siddhas*
12 *The Guru's Law: I Serve Those Who Serve Me*
19 *Come to Me When You Are Already Happy*
26 *There Is Nothing Cool about It*
30 *The Dharma*
34 *Divine Distraction*
48 *The Community*
57 *The Good News of This Satsang*

63 PART TWO: THE COMPLICATIONS OF SADHANA
THE WAY OF DIVINE COMMUNION

69 *The Way of Divine Communion*
75 *I Am Willing*
81 *The Practical Discipline*
84 *Functional Life as Study*
91 *Work, Food, Sex, Service*
129 *Turning through the Conditions*
133 *Approaching the Guru: Prasad and Darshan*
149 *The Four Stages of Practice*
171 *My Company*

187 PART THREE: THE COMPLICATIONS OF SADHANA
THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING

189 *The Path of Only God*
195 *The Sadhana of Discriminative Intelligence*
198 *The Student and the Teaching*
205 *Only Then Does the Student Touch My Heart*
216 *Crisis and Heat*
223 *Vitals, Peculiars, and Solids*
254 *If It Has Become Complicated, Return to the Basics*
257 *Formal Satsang and Real Meditation*
260 *The Stages of Understanding*

277 PART FOUR:
THE THREE STAGES OF GOD-REALIZATION

289 EPILOGUE: THIS WAY IS FULFILLED BY GRACE

295 APPENDIX: THE ASHRAM

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

AN INVITATION FROM THE DAWN HORSE COMMUNION

The published writings of Bubba Free John represent an invitation to all men to live in his Company and enjoy the perfect revelation of the Divine. The Dawn Horse Communion is his principal instrument for implementing the sadhana or true activity that is the only appropriate foundation for life in Communion with the Divine Person, who is the Nature, Condition, Form, Source, and Process of all beings, even the very World. If the humor of such an undertaking has been awakened in you through this literature, and if you feel prepared to sustain the happiness and the offenses of that sacrificial affair described by Bubba Free John, please accept his invitation. For further information, write to: The Dawn Horse Communion, Star Route 2, Middletown, California 95461.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

INTRODUCTION

No Remedy is a manual of basic practices for those beginning real spiritual life. However, it is not a "do-it-yourself" handbook. To interpret it as such would be to entirely miss its fundamental point: Satsang or Divine Communion, the consuming relationship to the Siddha-Guru, one who lives as very Truth and radically dissolves all limitations in those who live in his Company and do the sadhana he offers. The primary purpose of this book is to serve as a practical guide for those who have already begun to do that, who have come to Bubba Free John as Guru and joined his community of devotees, The Dawn Horse Communion.

This is not to say that *No Remedy* is useless to the casual reader. It communicates specific information about the radical sadhana of life with this Divine Master that will certainly illumine (if not undermine) one's knowledge of spiritual practices in general. It is rich with the humor of a Teaching and a Way that are free of dilemma and assumed difficulty from beginning to end. And besides outlining the basic approaches and practices of this life, *No Remedy* presents Bubba Free John's incisive commentary on topics ranging from homosexuality to dietary fanaticism to the politics of the spiritual community.

No Remedy is the primary text for new devotees of Bubba Free John, but it is not a comprehensive statement of his Teaching. Those who intend to accept Bubba's invitation to live this sadhana, or way of spiritual practice, as well as those who are simply interested in the philosophical and spiritual foundation of these instructions, should read the source books of Bubba's Teaching, including *The Knee of Listening, The Method of the Siddhas,* and *Garbage and the Goddess.* Also, subsequent study of two other manuals is necessary for those who are actually developing this practice. These companion texts are *The Eating Gorilla Comes in Peace,* a description of the diet and health practices generally followed by the Community (except during times of celebration), and *Conscious Exercise*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

and the Transcendental Sun, Bubba's illustrated description of a simple, balanced exercise system that invites conscious participation in conducting the life-force from and to its Divine Source.

All these texts, including *No Remedy*, deal extensively with various forms of action in life, such as diet, work, sex, exercise, study, and service. These basic life practices do in fact serve to harmonize and purify the body and mind, but that is not their principal purpose. It is not necessary or even desirable for one's life to become perfectly pure and harmonious. We are all going to *die* in any case! It is better to be happy in God, and that is what life in Bubba's Company is all about, from the very beginning.

This literature is all about real spiritual life, but this does not mean the way itself is a consoling life of satisfaction for conventional spiritual seekers. Satsang, or Divine Communion, is not, in principle, a mystical affair, especially in its beginnings. Its principle is not the exploitation of subjectivity. New devotees almost invariably come seeking mystical experience, a "smack" of enlightenment, a subtle and fascinating form of relationship to the Guru. But they don't really get what they came for. In the course of sadhana the individual who seeks fulfillment and looks for progress or attainment is *undermined*, not satisfied. He is asked to drop all his fascination with mysticism and subtlety and return to "Go," to a simple, practical, functional existence lived *as* his relationship to the Guru. Never mind your visions—get a nine-to-five job and let *that* be the expression of your life in Divine Communion. It is all offensive, unsettling, and really annoying, unless you discover its true principle—the simple and perfect happiness that Bubba lives to us all the time. When you can live without straining as an ordinary human being in God, it is then that all the spiritual and expanded dimensions of life can blossom in Truth. As an individual matures in this sadhana, he is given responsibilities relative to the subtle and subjective life and the extraordinary dimensions of experience. Only as his relationship to the Guru matures does he become sensitive to the import of the Guru's higher or

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

dimensional influence and Condition. And only the mature devotee can throw away what he is given, fulfilling the Law, which is sacrifice, even in the midst of the attainment of the illusions he always thought would be his salvation.

This way of sadhana is not one you can do on your own. The sadhana of this work cannot be fulfilled in worldly isolation, the privacy of your own subjective life. To imagine that it can is to dramatize your own illusion of separate existence. Regular contact with the living Guru, in the intimate environment of his community of devotees, is a necessary mirror in which to see yourself as you truly are, not as you imagine yourself to be. We all see grotesque self-images at times, but in the midst of this Satsang, it is endurable, even laughable. All forms of our self-imagery and the avoidance of relationship are rendered obsolete through mutual service in the spiritual community.

The realization of Satsang with Bubba is dissolution, not fulfillment, escape, or cure, but it is not a "heavy" process. One who turns to Bubba Free John in the unreasonable happiness and prior Condition of Satsang may go through all the crises of sadhana with relative ease. It is a conscious process, not a dramatic one; it is a graceful way of life. It is not a righteous routine demanding cut-your-guts-out asceticism and bone-grinding disciplines. Devotees sometimes tend to take on sadhana as if it were a program of self-denial, but that is just more of the traditional approach in dilemma that must be rendered obsolete in them. Such strategic approaches are just "hard medicine," another form of supposed remedy for the life of suffering. But they do not work.

There is, literally, *no remedy*!

The radical process of Satsang initiated in the Presence of Bubba Free John only destroys all vestiges of a man's compulsive resort to remedies, which is encouraged in every cultural "way" of humanity, spiritual or secular, traditional or contemporary. It exploits none of mankind's childish or adolescent remedial strategies. It offers no mediocre solutions to the dilemma of manifest life. This process requires only

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the happy realignment of all one has and is to the living miracle of the Guru's Presence. Thus, it is always full of humor relative to life and suffering. Life in Bubba's Company and Community is full of laughter, fluid, punctuated by the unexpected. It is always moving the individual into the happy crisis of falling apart in the Divine Reality. There is only God.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

1

LIVE WITH ME

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

My promise to devotees is the same that all the Siddhas have declared: I am with you now, as I have always been, and I will always be with you. My Function is without beginning or end. The work I do in my psycho-physical form is temporary. It is done in order to reawaken the way itself. Therefore, my human life is only a moment. But the purpose of my work while alive is to establish the way of Satsang, Divine Communion, for the coming generations of mankind.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

For the natural devotee, the physical form of the Guru is sufficient. This Truth is given throughout the traditions. Whenever the Siddhas speak, they say, don't try to take from me anything to do by and for yourself. Simply bring yourself into my Company and stay there. Simply rest your attention on me, sacrifice yourself to me, sit in my physical presence, live in my ordinary company, yield to me everything you experience in my company, and I will show you my Truth.

That is a simpler form of universal teaching than what is commonly called the universal teaching in our day, which is the mantra, or the way of Names. Teachers and ashrams today declare that for this age the repetition of the name of God is the necessary teaching. In this age of ignorance, when people cannot take on very technical responsibilities, it is said the repetition of the name of God is the simplest way. But from the most ancient times a simpler way even than that has been communicated by the Siddhas, the God-Realized. That way is simply to stay and live in their company. No kind of inwardness, not even any special instruction is necessary. If you will simply stay in the Guru's Presence, serve the Guru, contemplate the Guru, lead a simple sacrificial life relative to the Guru in His obviously present, physical, human appearance, then all the dimensions of God-Realization proceed from that practice. It is more profoundly simple even than the way of the mantra, the repetition of the God-Name.

However, in general, people are more complicated than that. So there is a complication to sadhana that is necessary, useful, and appropriate because of what a human being is. Most people do not do sadhana really in those simple terms. Some might perhaps, but essentially everybody should realize their sadhana in those simple terms and also be complicated to the degree it is appropriate. In any case, you must maintain that fundamental Condition of your sadhana, which is simply to live with me. That is the way of dependence on Grace, which is God, not on effects and experiences,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

all of which are caused, and all of which are ultimately binding.

All I have ever been doing in the Ashram is finding ways to keep people associated with me. Because of their coming and going and their inwardness and all their complications, I substitute all kinds of things for my physical form—teachings, dramas, parties, complicated dharma instructions, practices. All of these are just ways to keep you in my Company. All I am doing is just keeping you present while I am present, and that is sufficient. That is the whole of sadhana. Everything is an elaboration of that.

All the "complications" that are extensions of that sadhana should be applied personally to the individual doing sadhana. They are appropriate and right enough. But the essential Dharma is very simple: Live with me. Maintain your attention with me in the simplest, most direct terms, in whatever form I am present now or in the future. Essentially, that is the Teaching.

Understanding is not even necessary. It is already a complication. I am sitting here. Stay with me and give me your attention. Simply live in my Company with your attention. Life may become sacrifice, it may become all kinds of responsibilities that are appropriate and generally necessary. Still those responsibilities are not anything other than this simple condition. That is the whole of the Teaching, not only the simplest and most appropriate Dharma for this time, but it has been the simple communication of all the Siddhas through all time. Even in ages when people were capable of more technical responsibilities, this was the simple and most direct form of the Teaching. The most graceful Teaching is the Prasad, or Gift, of the Guru himself. There are no complications in the simple condition of your relationship to me. However, if you cannot be so simple, then you have to fulfill and become responsible for the karmas of spiritual life, just as you have to fulfill and become responsible for the karmas of all other ways of life. Nevertheless, the essential Teaching is simply to live with me.[1]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

What is a Siddha?

In its Hindu origins, the term has generally been understood to mean a man of great magical and arcane powers, a man of awesome spiritual experience, a human adept of heavenly, secret mysteries.

Bubba Free John uses the term in its perfect and sublime sense. In Bubba's Teaching, a Siddha is not a human being. He is God, Absolute Reality, alive in or through the earthly form of a man. Not exclusive God, not an incarnation that is somehow "more God" than all the rest of existence, but very God, living God, manifest in continuous and perfect relationship to all that appears and does not appear. A Siddha is tangible Grace. His mere appearance among common men is already Divine Grace, the most extraordinary miracle in all the worlds. His true and absolute expression as Guru is the silent communication of only God, and that communication is the already perfect activity of Grace. His relationship to his devotee is the unqualified enjoyment of Satsang, or Divine Communion, known and lived ever more perfectly by the world itself through, in, and as the devotee—and that relationship is already realized Grace. Commonly, in this world, the Grace of God seems difficult to find, hard to receive. The appearance of a Siddha is the Divine way of making the world itself a vehicle of instruction and absorption in God.

Merely to respond to the Presence of such a One, to go to him and live in his Company in the simplest, most natural way, is all that is necessary. So Bubba invites people just to live with him. Already by doing that we have literally entered the God-world, the dimension of Reality and Truth. It is very hard to describe, because God is not what we would imagine. There is no concept or image or sensation that you can find to describe the immediate transformation that occurs when you enter into the living Company of a Siddha-Guru. Except that suddenly, inexplicably, you are no longer living in the same world. Even while all your worldliness appears and you endure the drama of its undoing, you are

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

already absolved of your bondage to a life of gross suffering. You are released. You are free in God. And that is a tacit, intuitive certainty in you, no matter what transpires in the theatre of life.

Yet we seem to require more. The knots of our ignorance make the simplicity of that mere life with the Guru impossible for us at times. The Siddha's communicated Presence and Divine influence are not limited in any way, not even to the realm or realms in which he appears. How can it be? Even as he walks, talks, and speaks, he is living all beings, animating all the worlds. So his mere appearance is deceiving, if we allow it to be so. And thus his perfect Activity often goes unnoticed in the world, just as the Divine itself goes unnoticed. So the living expression of a Siddha also takes on many apparently conventional forms—his written and spoken teachings, and the presence of his community of devotees—all of which serve as consuming influences in the lives of those who approach him, and as an influential presence in the world at large.

Bubba Free John's work as a Siddha has included these dimensions. It continues to develop in these ordinary ways. But they are not the core of this work. Bubba Free John's Presence is the core of it—that and the living relationship he offers to all who respond to his Divine Nature, and turn to him as Guru in God.

Many Siddhas have appeared among men in the past. The most famous among them, perhaps, are men like Jesus, Gautama, and Krishna. Hidden behind the garb of lesser worldly destinies and apparently more limited functions are many others, all of whom have come to serve the same Divine process among men and women in this world.

Now the Siddhas, who live in the Form of Truth, are all the same. There is no difference between them. If you place two sticks into one flame, when you draw them out you will have two flames. But they are the same light. Just so, the Siddhas are fundamentally one. But they are functionally *unique, just as all manifest entities are fundamentally the generations of one Nature,*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

11/103

one Reality, but they are functionally unique.

When such a being arises in any place and form, such as this human manifestation on earth, he doesn't come to save the world. It is not possible to save the world. It is not "necessary" to save the world. The world is eternally, already "saved" by virtue of its Source and Nature. The Siddha comes at an appropriate time for those who are available to him. His Teaching appears with him in many forms in the world. There is the verbal Teaching, which is reported from person to person, and which can be published in books or other media. It becomes part of the communication of the world, and as such influences many, many people. But there are other levels of his Teaching, more intimate to his life. There are forms of his Teaching that involve a subtle and life relationship to him. And the closer the form of Teaching gets with his manifest appearance in the world, necessarily the fewer there are who can realize the Teaching at that level. Just so, there are a finite number of those who are alive in the world at any moment who are likely to respond to such intense forms of his Teaching, because every entity in the world is active in a different stage of experience, a different stage of understanding. Therefore, the Siddha or descended master enters the manifest life for the sake of those who can live to him directly, for the sake of those whom he can acquire while alive and draw into the form of Truth. He comes especially for these devotees, although his work is ultimately for the sake of the whole world.[2]

HOW THE SIDDHA-GURU WORKS

People come to the Siddha with all sorts of expectations. We expect him to heal, to provide marvelous experiences, to create an instant transformation,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

to acknowledge each of us as the only beloved one, the true devotee. And, to the degree we come to Bubba with any of that, we have to go through the fire of our own undoing! We have to simply live with him in practical ways and realize that the only expectation he will fulfill is that he will show us our sadhana hour by hour.

The Guru is a very paradoxical person. He exists to frustrate all your expectations and demands until they no longer distract you from a true relationship with him. So he may romance you, befriend you, ignore you, insult you. He may never speak to you, or he may invite you to dinner. He may behave toward you in any of these ways, in any of a countless variety of others, or in a bewildering and rapid succession of them—but everything he does is to turn you always to the Divine until you simply live with him in Truth.

Guru is not a form of status. It is not some state or privilege that you acquire and that gives you some sort of special right to receive the acknowledgment or gifts or belief or any of the rest that people might tend to give you. Guru is a function. It is a specific and special activity. In fact there is only one Guru. God is the Guru, and the function of Guru is eternal. It does not simply come into the world when some knowable human guru appears, nor does it leave at the end of a lifetime of such a one. The function of Guru is always present, always active, always available.

But men become attached to the principle of their own desire and limitation, the principle of Narcissus, and forget and deny and lose the awareness of the functions of God or Reality. So men of experience arise*

*In *The Knee of Listening* (page 26) Bubba describes Narcissus as follows:

> He is the ancient one visible in the Greek "myth," who was the universally adored child of the gods, who rejected the loved-one and every form of love and relationship, who was finally condemned to the contemplation of his own image, until he suffered the fact of eternal separation and died in infinite solitude.

(*continued on next page*)

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

among men in all times, for various reasons and with different degrees of significance and genuineness, to tell people what is really happening, what is really possible.

From time to time a Great Siddha or Siddha appears, an apparent individual who is happy with God, to the point where his own life on every level is constantly realizing the functions of God. In truth this individual is not separate from the functions of God. During his lifetime he manifests those functions, communicates them, demonstrates them to other beings, reminding them, reawakening them to the conscious enjoyment of the functions of Reality.

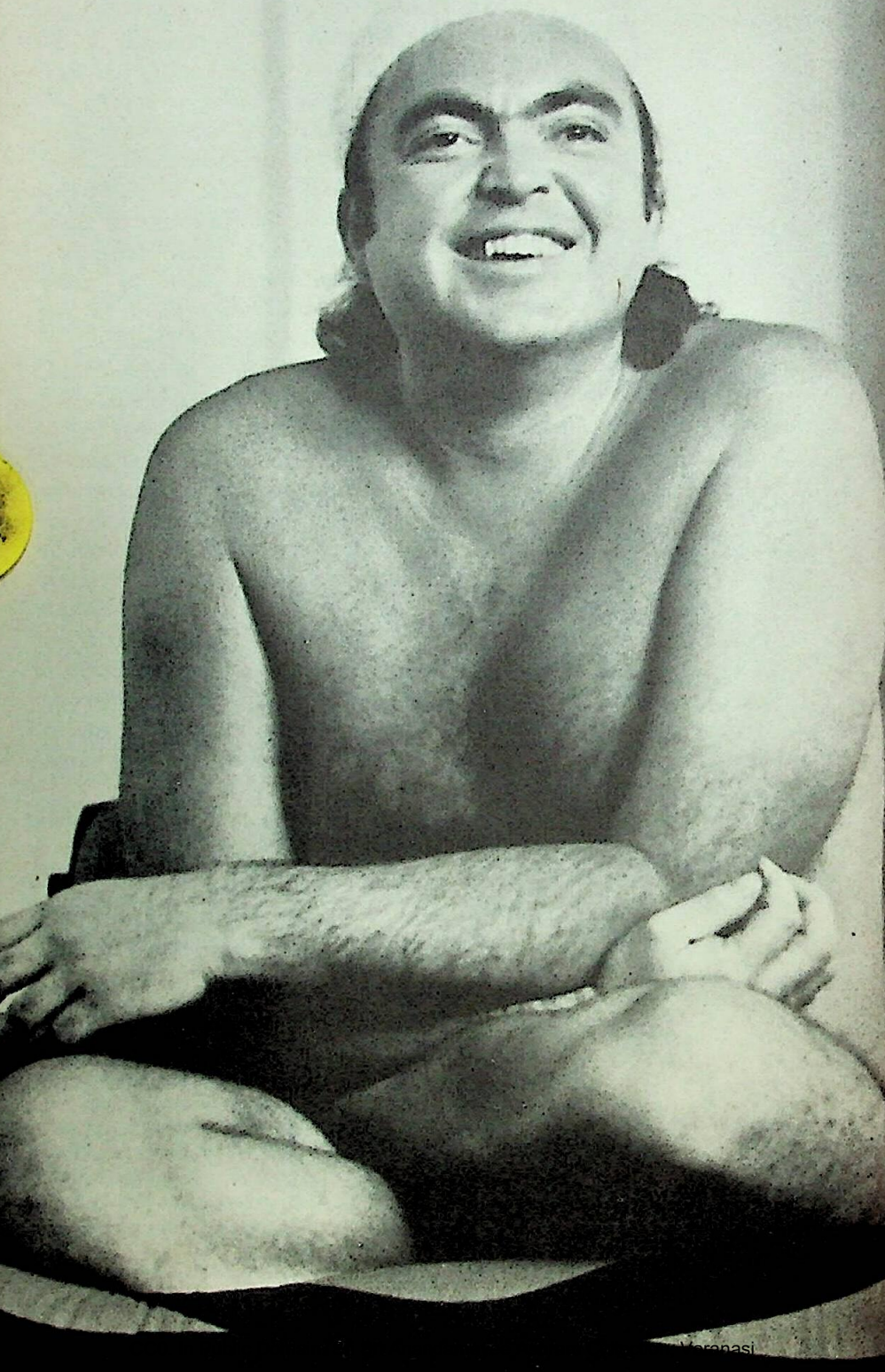
The entire purpose of such a one is to reveal God, to reveal the functions of God, so that devotees who find God also in such a human Guru may always live in God, enjoy the great Siddhis, true Siddhis, that are the Divine itself, while they live, and even beyond the lifetime of that human Guru. Such a Guru does not appear in the world in order to create a cult in which he is forever afterwards the object, the fetish, of mere belief and acknowledgment. There is an appropriate form of relationship to the human Guru, and it is not the cultic form. Truly, the devotee must understand in the company of his human Guru, and he must discover that the one who is his human Guru and the specific function that is always lived to him through his human Guru are the Divine activity.

The Divine must be free to do its work. The Divine is communicating itself and at the same time is awakening what must be responsibility in the apparent individual. The Divine is also creating a purifying event, a transforming event, that must itself continually

I began to see that same logic operative in all men and every living thing, even the very life of the cells and the energies that surround every living entity or process. It was the logic or process of separation itself, of enclosure and immunity. It manifested as fear and identity, memory and experience. It informed every function of being, every event. It created every mystery. It was the structure of every imbecile link in the history of our suffering.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

be undone through the direct activity and communication of the Guru. So for that reason, the Guru's life is a paradox, because the Divine always has the option to assume another position, or to set aside something that has become obsessive. The Divine must always be free to communicate the Dharma alive under the present conditions of Narcissus.

For this reason the Divine and the Guru cannot be described according to some fixed notion or some fixed communication. The Guru always exceeds it. He is always alive. The Guru does not become a dogma, a holy thing. The Guru is a process. He is always alive, and he is always living in response to the present condition and strategy of his devotee. He is a paradox because he cannot strictly be defined and identified and assumed. He is humorous. You should have gathered that about God by now. Because life has never been black and white for you. Life is not black and white. Life is very wild, because of the paradoxical nature of the Divine Presence in the world. The Divine does not exist over at such and such an address, as a fixed symbol with a 700-page closed book in front of it. As such the Divine becomes limited to symbols and forms and cultic treatment, and the function of the Divine is thereby removed, because as soon as the fixed principle is assumed by Narcissus, he transforms it through his own strategy. Any experience or manifestation or symbol of the Divine, whatever its degree of magnificence, can be turned into homely and harmless stuff by Narcissus. Narcissus is a magician who can turn the Pacific Ocean or a sea of galaxies into a backyard pond or another middle-class vacation spot.

So the Divine's Presence in the world is a paradoxical one, and the function of the Guru is, therefore, also a paradoxical one, in which he is always transforming the quality of his communicated relationship to his devotee in order to serve his transformation.[3]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

THE GURU'S LAW: I SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE ME

Bubba Free John invites you simply to enjoy a constant relationship with him, which is to realize the happiness of an ordinary, pleasurable life in the Company of the Siddha-Guru. The way of Communion with the Divine Person is exquisitely simple, and, paradoxically, it is also at times unbelievably difficult. Bubba has no interest in your search, which is in truth the sign of your refusal of God. He does not, and will not, now or ever, support the search in you. His only interest is your liberation in God, and everything he does communicates and serves that liberation.

He means business, and so his invitation to live with him is also the most absolute and radical demand for responsibility that can be made of a human being. To all who would come to him as devotees, Bubba still offers no compromise and no consolation. "Lay it at my feet. Make the practical, life-level conditions of sadhana a whole life of service to me. That is the way to realize our spiritual relationship, and it is the only way." He will accept nothing less, even at the beginning.

*Satsang is the foundation of sadhana. Until Satsang is realized, the whole development of sadhana cannot begin. So this early period is the time in which the foundation of sadhana is realized, in which your relationship to me is formal. You enjoy a relationship to me through the form of Prasad, which is not a ceremony but simply an expression of the nature of our relationship.**

The individual comes to me on the basis of this Teaching. Then he is turned over to the Community, and all of my conditions, my disciplines, are made known to him. He, or she, continues to come to me

*Prasad is literally "the return of a gift to the giver." In the Community, it is gifts of flowers or fruit returned to the devotee as expressions of the Guru's spiritual blessing.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

again and again, and as time goes on he begins to know this spiritual relationship as a living, practical matter. His approach to me becomes sacrificial and full of gratitude, surrender, submission. His approach to me becomes love, becomes sacrifice.

As this relationship develops, then, the whole life of living my disciplines becomes sacrifice to me. And when his whole life has become that, when the drama of his life is no longer a question of, will he live the conditions or won't he live them, will he stay here or will he go to some "quickie" sadhana center downtown, when all of that ceases to be the drama of his life, the theatre of his life, when his whole life becomes sacrifice, when everything he does becomes conscious sacrifice to me, when that sacrifice is what his life is all about, then he can come and sit with me when I sit with the Community.

The transition between the new devotee's stage and entrance into the Community (after the second stage of practice, the practice of the breath of God, is initiated) is a very important moment. It signifies in practice the transition into the real form of sadhana. It signifies the development of sadhana. Up until that transition the individual's whole life in the Ashram has been devoted to the realization of the principle of sadhana, which is Satsang, this sacrificial relationship. When that relationship is established, when his life has become service to me, then he is welcome to come and sit with me in the full company of the Community.

You should all consider whether you approach me in anything like the sacrificial way I have described to you tonight. I will be glad to hear about it. If you have not begun to approach me in this way, then you are as good as just having come to the bookstore this morning. And seeing that is good.

Thus, this sadhana requires everything of you. You cannot remain a child seeking a dependent and consoling relationship to God or to me. You cannot approach me as if I were the super-parent who is employed to make you feel better about everything and to step in when life is getting heavy for you and throw a party. You are to approach me on the basis of this Teaching,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

not on the basis of your usual search, your childishness. When the Teaching has already made its point in some very fundamental way, then come to me and the Teaching will make its point absolutely. You must enter into my service and establish this real relationship, this sacrificial life. When that relationship is established, then there is Grace.

Sadhana is about breaking through the usual life of tendency, breaking through the pattern of destiny, not playing upon your desires, your inclinations, your willfulness, your preferences. This consciousness, this intelligence awakened through the Teaching through which you came to me, must become the principle of your life from this time. And all of the rest of it, every bit of it, flesh and breath and belongings and husband, wife, children, everything must come under the discipline of that intelligence.

There is no other way. There is no "quickie," no irresponsible path that winds up in God. There are only responsible paths and all of them are the same path. This process of responsibility in Satsang is the timeless and ancient process communicated by the Siddhas, made possible through the instrumentality of Satsang. Apart from destiny and death you have no other choice but Satsang. All your alternatives are brief. When you realize that, and when you are willing to be intelligent, to take on this responsible way, then you become capable of the kind of approach I have described to you this evening.

Until this Teaching has made such a point in you, however, you cannot do it. You will be unwilling to serve me. And if you do not serve me, you may be able to stay in the Ashram for a while, but you will only be tested until you begin to serve. This life of service must become humorous, happy, juicy, living. It is only when you are viewing the possibility of this life of service from the point of view of your tendencies that it seems humorless and difficult. But when you become established in this Satsang, then Satsang becomes the form of your enjoyment.

The kind of responsibility required of you as a new person in the Ashram is nothing! I hate to tell you this!

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

It is the least of it. I mean, how much discipline is there really involved in the conditions you have been given? They're all very ordinary. They amount to just a simple, life-supporting, natural, ordinary, pleasurable life. But even as ordinary or natural as that life is, as lawful as it is, it is sufficient to be entirely offensive to a subhuman life, a life in ignorance. These simple conditions are enough to test and try every possible kind of complex so-called human condition. The offenses are there for everyone. And you notice how childish you are as soon as you get a little offended. As soon as you cannot at will do a few of the crazy things that you are used to injecting into the routine of your life over a year's time, you get petulant, you get crazy.

When I was doing the equivalent of your sadhana, I felt these inclinations. These tendencies are there to be dealt with, to become matters of your responsibility. It is not just that you are not supposed to be aware of tendencies, but there is a higher process to which you are fundamentally committed, and which you would not abandon under any conditions. Thus you must pass through the difficulties created by your tendencies at times. That is what it is to be a human being. Everything else is just subhuman, the exploitation of the mechanisms only. Human life is responsibility, consciousness. You must bring that kind of manliness, whether you are male or female, to the process of this sadhana.

It is not that you have been given a little technique to focus your attention in some subtle center, in which you can forget the body and all of its complications, and by continuing to focus on that subtle something-or-other you then drift out of this world into heavenly wonderments. You have not been given such a process. Such a process is not true. The real process that is in God is all a matter of responsibility. It involves a moral transformation of life in consciousness, a complete transformation, a restoration to the law of sacrifice of your gross life. You cannot abandon your gross life by focusing your attention somewhere and thus attain liberation. You can temporarily change your experience if you focus your attention with enough interest, but

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

eventually you return to the place where you have karmas.

There must be the moral transformation or the return to consciousness and responsibility of the dimension in which you are appearing. On that basis then, there is the appearance of other kinds of transformations and for the same purpose: to test you to the point of consciousness and responsibility, not to entertain you or to give you a thousand-year lifetime in a better place rather than a seventy-year lifetime here. This sadhana, therefore, requires a great deal of you, but once you decide to do it, it is very interesting and happy.

In general, to come to the point of maturity takes years. There must be intense commitment and involvement for years before there is maturity, not an end-phenomenon of some super state but just maturity, real responsibility for the spiritual process in the totality of your life. That maturity goes on and develops eternally, without time. But to come to that point of maturity, to come to the point where you are doing the sadhana of a perfect devotee, is essentially a matter of years, in some cases many, many years, in some cases perhaps many lives. But since you have essentially begun it or are willing to begin it, I am willing for your sadhana to be resolved in this lifetime. I am willing for this sadhana to be conclusive, not only in this lifetime, but long before your so-called death in this world. But if it is to be so, you must cease to resort to your childishness.

You must do this sadhana with great intensity, with great and ordinary maturity, and pass through this process that is entirely offensive to all your tendencies. It is absolutely true that this process of sadhana offends all your tendencies, which means it offends you absolutely, *in every way, in every dimension in which you have existence or in which you may realize existence. You will feel that offense, you will feel your resistance, you will feel all kinds of tendencies that are anything but the availability to this Satsang and its sadhana. And you will be tested by them because you must pass through them. That is what sadhana is about. There are*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

times when it is extremely difficult, difficult beyond belief, and you must go through those times. Those are the most valuable, the most purifying times.

If your approach to me is wonderful and full of love and sacrifice, as it should be, then all the karma that must be seen, that must become your responsibility, can be shown to you easily. I am willing for it to be shown to you in a dream or in just a brief moment, some little circumstance that comes and goes. I am perfectly willing for you to yield that dimension that you must surrender in yourself on just such an occasion. I am willing for these karmas to pass in easy ways, in dreams and simple circumstances. But if your approach is not whole, not direct, not one of service, consciously lived all the time, to the degree that you do not live such sadhana in my Company, you must suffer your karmas as they stand. They will still be awakened in you by the force of this Company that you keep with me, but they will be awakened in gross ways, as they tend to appear outwardly in your life, outwardly in the waking state. Then the process has to be very dramatic and heavy.

But the drama is unnecessary. If you are a little intelligent, a little happy, a little free in my Company, then you can grasp it as a little lesson. But some people have to be beaten half to death to stop chewing their fingernails! The little lesson they have to get requires incredible circumstances! This life is just such a lesson, a lesson that would not be necessary if you were straight. Nevertheless, it has happened, and by taking on the form of sadhana in this life, you can make all of the necessary lessons much easier, much more simple.

This is one of the effects of this Prasad, to make it possible for the entire affair of your appearance in this world to become a matter of responsibility in this lifetime. Independent of that sadhana, that Satsang, that Prasad, that Grace, it is absolutely impossible for most human beings to complete the cycle of realization in a single lifetime. There are a few who appear at random in the human plane for whom it all seems to happen very easily, very quickly. But for the usual man, independent of the real process of Satsang, the transformation and liberation of manifest life is a matter

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

of billions and billions of lifetimes, of numberless lifetimes. This is true!

Now in some sense all of that is amusing, and the dumber you are, the more likely you are to be amused by it! But there is really nothing amusing about it at all from my point of view. It has never been amusing to me. This life as it is commonly lived is insane. It was perfectly obvious to me that there was nothing to do but sadhana. There was nothing else in life that was worth the suffering. I haven't become a pleasureless man, obviously, at any point in my life. But I made life sadhana, and doing that required great discipline and great humor.

And it requires the same of you. The way of the Siddhas is simple and easy, because it does not take billions of lifetimes, but it requires a hell of a lot in one lifetime. And yet some day you will look at it and see that it required nothing at all, that you did nothing. It all seemed very dramatic at the time, and yet it involved nothing at all. But you must stop being children. You must be present with force, with energy, with life! You've got to kick ass! And lay it at my feet every time you come to me—in other words, all day. Eventually you will have laid it all down, and you will have gotten everything back. But if you bring nothing, if you literally bring me a piece of fruit, be warned!

The play between us is the theatre of sadhana. It requires great responsibility, consciousness, and discipline, and on the other hand it is also amusing, pleasurable, and interesting. I expect you to do it all and not complain. When I ask you how you are, I want to hear that you are good. I do not want to see any coming and going and all that nonsense. Just do what you have to do and get it started. Then it goes on forever. Everything else is quick.[4]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

COME TO ME WHEN YOU ARE ALREADY HAPPY

This is the outrageous, paradoxical command of a Siddha-Guru. How is it possible to come to the Guru *already* happy? What does Bubba mean?

> *Come to me when you are already happy. In other words, do not approach me as a common seeker, but approach me on the basis of the Teaching, when it has made its point in you. When the Teaching has made its point, the individual comes to me with gratitude, in a spirit of self-sacrifice (or self-giving), surrender, and submission.*[5]

The Teaching having "made its point in you" does not mean that you have somehow become intellectually convinced by it. It is not as if, upon reading Bubba's books, seeing a film, or hearing a tape, you merely feel that it makes sense, or that it is better than most other teachings you have come across, or that certain aspects of it answer your personal questions about spiritual life in a way that really aids your spiritual development, and you can take it from there. People have these kinds of responses to the Teaching all the time, and many of them approach Bubba as Guru on that basis—but unless an entirely other kind of response arises in them, they never stay with him for long.

That true response, when the Teaching really makes it point in you, is a spontaneous, humble, and defenseless acknowledgment of the very core of Bubba's gospel to the common or usual man: that his life, no matter what form it may apparently take, is entirely, literally, and always a form of *suffering*. Not simple pain, which is different from and can be alleviated by pleasures, successes, etc., but a form of misery and complication that cannot be touched even by the best of life's common happinesses.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

There is only God. Well, how can there be such God-enjoyment without loss of face? Without sacrifice itself? Without being undone in God? And how do you begin to realize such enjoyment? By suffering. No one begins to do sadhana until he or she has suffered, has begun to observe and know that whether the circumstances are pretty good or not so good, fundamentally his destiny is suffering, life is suffering. It is a complication, a depression. There is a fundamental sense to life itself over time that is suffering. But you get to know this only by suffering, by living an ordinary manifest life and doing what you feel like doing, doing what everybody does, doing what is culturally impressed upon you, doing what circumstances require you to do by reaction, trying to make this a heaven world or a utopia, trying to make human life some sort of perfect vessel, trying to make your own life work out terrifically. By living a life you will know suffering!

Therefore suffering is the first form of grace. And it is only when you begin to comprehend your life as suffering, as limitation, as dis-ease, in some very fundamental way, that you will do sadhana in its true form. Anybody can want to be consoled, anybody can feel that life could be better or that life is not really so terribly good right now. But the practice of sadhana rests in the critical comprehension of life itself as bondage.[6]

This recognition of life itself as suffering can come in the midst of any apparent life circumstance. You don't have to be failing miserably and full of neuroses—in fact, most people who seem to be always getting kicked in the teeth by life generally can never get enough distance from it to see its inherent limitations. But, at the other extreme, there are plenty of people in Bubba's community today who were drawn into that comprehension in the midst of a life that was apparently successful, full, and happy. So it cannot be determined,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

on the basis of outward evidence, in what kind of person or in what kind of circumstances such a realization may begin to awaken. That awakening is entirely a matter of the Divine process.

When this recognition of life as suffering appears, your perception of the world begins to change, not necessarily coincident with a philosophical or mental comprehension. Prior to this acknowledgment of dis-ease, you continue to think of the world as a something. You objectify it as a place, as a circumstance, as a material event, just as you do yourself. You imagine that the world is a massive, solid, physical process and that even your thinking is somehow produced by chemicals. And you go on living that solid, muscular life until you begin to suffer, until you can't be blithe and naive any longer.

With this breaking up that suffering produces comes a tacit awareness that the world is not physical in nature, but psycho-physical. All of the spiritual and religious traditions essentially acknowledge that the world is a psycho-physical process, not a physical one. The world itself, not you only, not man only, but the world, this stuff, this universe, is a psycho-physical process whose essential foundation is consciousness. All the imagery of God and language about God develop within a tradition based on this supposition.

You become more and more sensitive to this principle yourself the more you are released into a sense of your own true existence. When you cease simply and mechanically to move about and do what you do and exploit yourself in purely vital terms, but instead you are opened up through failure, through suffering, through insight, then the world begins to seem very different to you. The more psychic and conscious you become, the more obvious it is that the world is also of that nature. You begin to

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

enjoy a psychic relationship to the world, not just a physical one. Suffering has released you into your own depth.

The profundity of this awareness varies from person to person, but the possibility of sadhana exists truly only in that instant. When the world ceases to be so solid and when you are no longer obsessed, you may still be moving with your life but no longer obsessed with it as something ideal and perfect. The entire form of existence has become loose, its definitions are not so clear, and all kinds of experiences in which the world becomes like dreams may begin to occur in a person to create awe and mystery in him, even drive him a little batty.[7]

The recognition of the psycho-physical nature of the world is not, as you might think, a profound or mystical perception. More often it may seem merely disorienting, just further evidence of the difficulty and cramp of life. If the person has been locked into an entirely materialistic view of his life, to suddenly begin to perceive that it is not all so linear and solid is very unsettling. But it may also become grounds for an entirely new form of his life's search and exploitation of the arenas of his present suffering. There begins a period of adventure, of seeking high and low to undo the inherent complication of life. It may take on the form of the common adventures of our Western world, the exploitation of money, power, sexuality, food, drink, and drugs in a most intense way. Or it might take on the apparently spiritual form of mystical flights and exploitation of the subtler mechanisms of our existence.

But contained within the seed of all that change is the possibility for real sadhana or for God-Realization. Contained within that acknowledgment of suffering is the possibility of knowing the Guru. And when you meet the Guru, then your adventure is halted. . . . Each individual develops an odd life of his own through this adventure until that same sensitivity

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

in which the life of suffering was realized and acknowledged brings him into the company of the Guru, and he becomes sensitive to the Guru's consciousness and influence.

The Guru constantly indicates that suffering is not anything that is happening to you or has happened or will happen. Changes of state are not fundamentally to be equated with this suffering to which you have become sensitive. Your suffering is your own action. Even what you call yourself is a form of action. So the Guru draws the individual into more and more intimate company, the mutually sacrificial relationship that sadhana involves, and he constantly serves this realization in the individual, serves this sensitivity to suffering and the inspection of its nature, serves more and more the intuition of That from which all of this is arising.

In this way the individual begins to adapt to a pattern of responsibility, whereas before, motivated by his initial sense of suffering, he wandered. In the Guru's Company his sadhana becomes specific, a matter of responsibility, not the accumulation of experience nor the exploitation of the mechanisms of experience.[8]

So the Teaching makes its point in a man in this way: It points out to him at long last that he himself is the suffering and that no action he undertakes on his own can undo it. But it is not a gloomy Teaching, because its source is the Guru, one in whom that suffering is already and eternally finished, one who lives as very God, the utter radiant happiness that is the ground of all existence prior to the creation, the hallucination, of suffering in all its forms. So the Guru's criticism of the self-created life of suffering comes hand in hand with his announcement of his own Graceful Presence. And there is nothing modest about that Presence, nothing humble. The Guru may say things like, "I am empty, the servant of the Divine," and so on, but these are not ways of effacing a self that persists in the notion

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

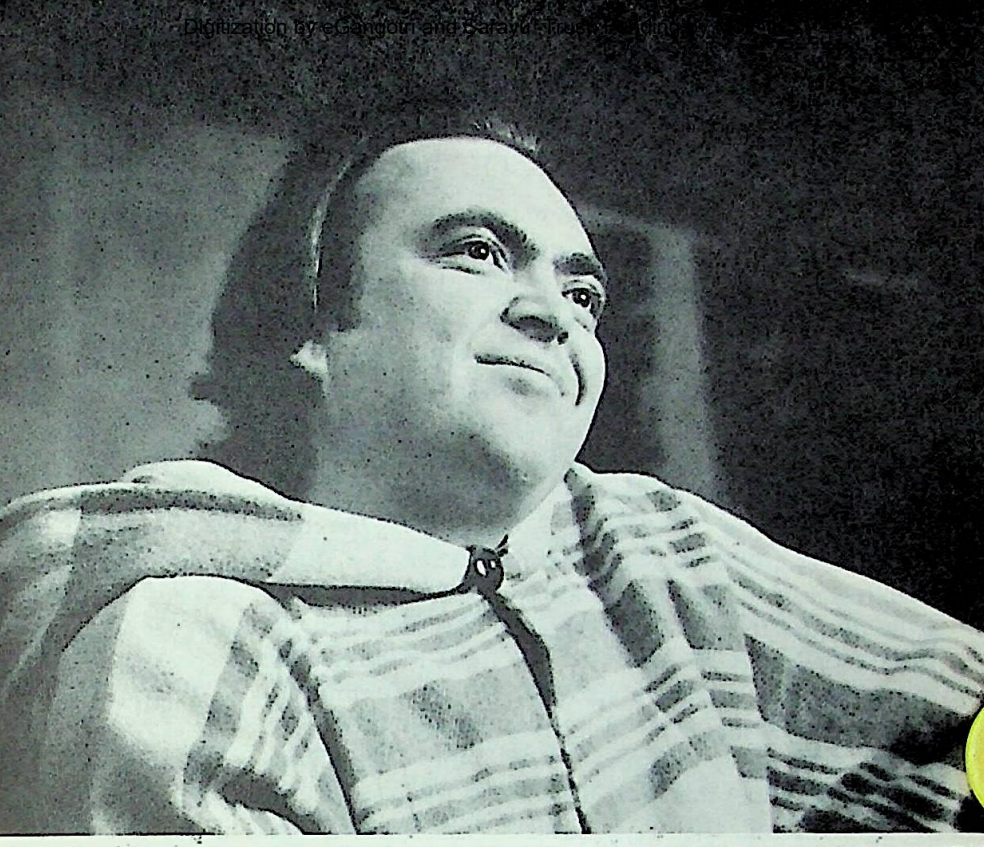
that it is less than the One it serves. They are ways of distracting attention from his apparently personal, human presence to his very Presence, God. The Guru is so perfectly absorbed in that One that he has no self whatsoever. He cannot find any identity other than very God, and that is what he lives to people. It is perfect existence, free of conflict and fear, and the Guru is potent and capable of absorbing all who come as devotees into his own very Nature.

So it is only natural for one in whom the Teaching has truly made its point to come to the Guru already happy, ecstatic to be free of the sorrowful, unyielding burden of his own search, beside himself with the sudden good news that he can completely entrust not only his spiritual life but his whole life to the Divine manifest in human terms. It is a great, great relief. For many people the moment of first realizing that Bubba is alive and available, and that he is indeed a Divine Master, is itself one of the most profound and ecstatic moments of their spiritual lives. And that is no accident. Because in that instant of yielding and surrender, the Guru meets them with his very Nature, already their own Consciousness. That Consciousness is what suddenly awakens. The intuition of the Guru's Presence somehow at the core of your life is happiness itself. It awakens at the very beginning, and from then on it is simply a matter of coming to live with him and allowing that life to mature into all of the ordinary and extraordinary forms of Divine Realization.

Thus it is that all true devotees come to Bubba already happy. True enough, their search must unwind over time, the sacrifice must be perfect and complete. We all find ourselves compulsively moving towards all kinds of lesser, more complicated, often inappropriate ways of approach to Bubba as Guru. But that simple, initial movement is sublime, involuntary, and perfect in Truth. It is already realization. That response is Satsang, Divine Communion, simply living with the Siddha-Guru in God.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC-0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

It is clear that anyone who approaches the Guru through the verbal Teaching, in its written, auditory, or visual forms, already has literal contact with the Guru. He has contact with the Guru as Presence, as Divine Conscious Power, or Siddhi. It is not that the Guru-Siddhi is in the book or on the tape recording. But the tape is like the Guru's physical body. The medium is an agent for the Siddhi through which the Siddhi is brought into life. The intuitive sympathy the new devotee feels with Bubba's communication is a direct manifestation of the Guru's Grace, of the Siddhi. Thus, if he decides to live on the basis of that intuition, he does sadhana in response to that literal Siddhi. The same Forceful Presence is also alive in the Community of the Guru's devotees, the living process of human beings who enjoy relationship with the Guru. Thus anyone who does this sadhana through the instruments of the Teaching, that is, in contact with the recorded form of the Teaching and with the Community, has literal contact with the Siddhi.

> *The Guru is not just a human person who can have human effects on you. The Guru is active, present as that Siddhi. The Guru is communicated to you under all conditions, twenty-four hours a day. Once that contact is established, once that relationship is established, that Siddhi communicates itself under all conditions, in all states.*[9]

Sitting in the physical presence of the Guru is the most potent confrontation with the Siddhi. It is a grace. However, it is not by sitting with the Guru that your sadhana is fulfilled. If that were true, all Bubba would have to do is to give you a "zapping," and send you on your way. As a new devotee, your sadhana is realized in confrontation with the Teaching and the Community. Unless the Teaching is alive in you, not merely comprehended by the mind, but lived in relationship,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

you could sit before the Guru until your death and not understand. But when the Teaching is alive in you, confrontation with the physical form of the Guru is a way of quickening you, of enlivening your sadhana. Therefore, while enjoying a life of study of the Teaching and engaging in the cooperative life of the Ashram Community, you should enjoy the physical presence of the Guru as often as you can.

The simple process of sadhana is one of progressive intimacy with the Guru, of becoming sensitive to the Guru's Presence, of yielding your resistance and your concern to the Guru.

You can't be a little, frozen, "poor me" creature and not commit yourself to the Guru, not make youself known to the Guru, not live with the Guru, not communicate with the Guru. You cannot remain mediocre in the presence of the Guru and expect that all the manifestations of spiritual life are going to be given to you. You must put yourself in that condition in which the Guru-Siddhi is allowed to become active in your own case. You must establish that relationship and live it.

People do the same thing in relation to the human Guru that they are always already doing in relation to the Divine. And they will experience the same effects if they dramatize the life of Narcissus in relation to the Guru. Nothing *will happen. That is what will happen. They will just become more upset, more dry, more concerned.*

The life of the devotee is vulnerable to the Guru, whereas Narcissus does not permit himself to be vulnerable to anyone. Immunity is what Narcissus is all about. But the devotee is absolutely vulnerable. He has turned himself, opened himself absolutely to the Guru, surrendered himself to the Guru. So he is in the same position that you are when you open yourself to anyone in life.

You know how vulnerable you become when you are open, intimate with another. You become subject to his whims, become subject to his moods, the circumstances that he creates. So you must put yourself

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

into that condition of vulnerability in relation to the Guru. And the Guru puts all of his devotees through changes of state. He continually works upon the link between himself and his devotees. He tests that vulnerability to be certain that the devotee will not withdraw.

It is not the Guru's responsibility to go out and pick people up and fondle them and convince them that he is the Guru. If the devotee wants to be reserved and immune, that is his business. He is not a devotee in such a case. And the forceful link with the Guru is not established in such a case. Neither is it established in the case of people who overtly act out an emotional, externally devotional quality.

The human Guru is brief. The Dharma, the path, communicated by the Guru during his lifetime, will remain. But that manifestation of the Divine function is brief. It is the responsibility of the devotee to make use of it while it appears. If individuals, through the awakening of true devotion in consciousness, become a sacrifice through Satsang with the Guru, then the Siddhi that is the Guru will remain in the form of the Community beyond the death of the human Guru.[10]

One of the things that we tend to forget all the time is that this vulnerability Bubba speaks of is not a hidden sensitivity, a private subjective emotion that each individual knows only in himself and does not even see in others. On the contrary, to be true and full, this openness to the Guru has to be wide open and visible in life terms. In fact the whole sequence of life routines and occasions in the Community is geared to enhance that non-private, non-secret condition of vulnerability to the Guru in every way. For instance, in a talk called "God, Guru, and Grace," Bubba pointed out how "there is nothing cool" about the formal occasion of Prasad in the Community when everyone comes into the Communion Hall and approaches Bubba individually in full view of the rest of the Community, offers a gift symbolic of his self-surrender at Bubba's feet, bows to the floor, and then receives in return a piece of fruit or a sweet, the symbol of Bubba's Grace.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

That is not cool. You lose face doing such a thing. But that is what the whole of sadhana is, this kind of relationship to me. It is a spiritual relationship. It is an involvement with Grace. It is life in God. And there must be forms within the Ashram continually to remind people and to oblige them to realize sadhana as life in God. The ways by which people tend to realize their sadhana are conventional, cool and hip ways in which they do not lose face at all, in which they are always getting better, dealing with things, going up and down, going through phases, finding out about themselves, getting lessons, all that really boring bullshit!

What sadhana really is, however, is this relationship. It is a graceful process. That is what you are involved in.

You must make every moment an involvement in that process. Do not merely live these conditions, but make the conditions of your life service to me. There is a vast difference between the conventional realization of sadhana, which is to do all the things you are told to do, and the realization that transforms all the activities, all the conventional forms of your lives into literal, direct, conscious, and present service to me. That is sadhana. It is not being good or doing things right and then feeling that you did all the things they told you to do but you just don't feel good and you just don't feel like you're growing and you just don't feel like you're getting any closer to realizing Satsang! The reason that you are not getting any closer is because you cannot get any closer. That realization has to occur in this moment. In this moment, the conditions of your life must be made into my service, and if they are not, that spiritual relationship that involves the psycho-physical being entirely, is not alive. There is no Grace then, no participation in the Divine process.

Every moment must be realized in this form of service, every moment must be realized as the sacrament of Prasad, in which the self is yielded, in which all content is yielded, and in which Grace is received. That is the cycle of a truly human existence. Until life is realized as that there is no human happiness. There is no transcendental realization or intuitive

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

understanding. There is no sadhana, there is no Grace, and there is no transformation through the levels of responsibility that corresponds to the development of mature sadhana. Spiritual transformation depends on this realized, ecstatic condition in every moment. Whenever it does not exist, you are just doing the same old shit. You are just living a conventional life under the guise of spiritual life. A spiritual life is one in which you lose face in each moment, in which you are the servant of God, in which you are dependent upon the services of God. Unless such a literal and conscious and ecstatic and face-losing affair appears in every moment as your life, you are not doing sadhana. And every moment in which you lapse and forget to live your life as that, you are again not doing sadhana.[11]

THE DHARMA

The Communication of a Siddha is Perfect in every moment. Everything he says and does reflects and expresses this Divinity and serves to awaken its realization in the world. We receive this Communication only partially and in stages, realizing more as we mature in sadhana, because we are always tending to assume and live from a limited point of view. And because we are human beings, we read the influence of this Divine Communication only in ourselves and in other human beings. But in truth the Dharma or Teaching of God is given perfectly and continuously by the Siddha-Guru to all beings simultaneously. That gift is utterly paradoxical in its nature. There is no way we can comprehend it. It is the humor of the Divine.

The verbally communicated Dharma is delivered essentially to beings who apparently have minds, who

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

appear to function with the mental vehicle. So the communicated, verbal Dharma is usable only by human beings. The Dharma in Truth, the Dharma that is Truth, that is the Siddhi, that is the Guru-function, is communicated to all beings in all times under all conditions. And the Guru in Satsang is in fact not identical to the Teaching which he gives to human beings, which stands by itself, and which they can confront. The Guru in Satsang serves all beings. He communicates a Satsang in which even the frogs may participate, and in fact many do! All kinds of creatures, even the walls, participate in that sadhana with the same variations of intensity that appear among human beings who deal with the verbal Teaching.[12]

DEVOTEE: Perhaps I don't understand in any fundamental way what the Dharma is.

BUBBA: The Dharma is the totality of this Satsang. Only one aspect of it is the verbal Teaching, and there are also other kinds of communications that are considered in the stages of sadhana. But the Dharma in Truth is not different from the Guru, not different from the Divine. It is realized as a process in which, piece by piece, individuals become responsible for the totality of their existence. In Satsang, the Dharma, which is Truth itself, is communicated always perfectly, absolutely, without limitation. It is not that this much of it is communicated today, and tomorrow this much, and this much the next day, but always all of it is given. The Truth is fully communicated in Satsang. It is the perfect condition of Satsang. But you realize it as a process in time. You see its evidence, its revelation, in stages. But my work with you, in its fundamental and most perfect sense, is always the same.

I do not start with you at the bottom and push you up. I do not assume your limitation. The assumption of limitation is not the nature of this Satsang. In this Satsang your perfection, your real Condition, is assumed, the Divine nature of this life is assumed, lived, and known. You are included in the Divine by the force of this Siddhi, and you are polarized to it. The very

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

process of your own life is turned around and re-polarized relative to its native functions. But you do not see your real Condition in Truth, in its perfect form in this moment. Instead, you see the beginning of movements, the signs, new things to be responsible for, new things in the midst of which to understand. But Satsang is the same for realized devotees as it is for new devotees. Thus, the Dharma is not other than the Guru, not other than Truth. It is the process of Reality entirely. But the service I give to those who do this sadhana is given in stages that speak to the dimension of sadhana that is absorbing them in the moment.

The verbal Teaching, which we also call the Dharma, does have several aspects, including the stages of practice. But Truth itself is the Dharma. It is this Satsang. And apart from these times of discussion, we just come and sit together. There is no speech. There is no special little thing I do sitting with new devotees and a really big thing I do sitting with perfect devotees. Satsang is the same for everyone.[13]

So what we, as human beings and as devotees in various stages of sadhana, conceive as the Dharma is always only a reflection of the continuous communication that Bubba is making to us. How we conceive, understand, or appreciate this Teaching only reflects our own capacity to receive it. The perfect or realized devotee sees that the true Teaching is Consciousness itself, prior to and inclusive of all the worlds! And he knows perfectly well that this Teaching is not equivalent to any philosophy whatsoever, not even the philosophical and verbal statement given by the Guru.

Bubba's Teaching has always been a living event. He has always not only spoken to his devotees but also shown them what he was speaking of in their very lives. Thus, there have been periods of time in the Ashram that were characterized by very exaggerated qualities—times of prolonged and strict living of life-conditions, times of wild celebrations, times when Bubba was generating all sorts of extraordinary spiritual experiences to demonstrate the point of his Teaching relative to them. And Bubba himself has often seemed

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

an exaggerated man in his behavior, in order to provide the lessons, the elaboration of the Dharma, necessary to the various stages of his Teaching. But in fact, as he points out, his behavior is only a tool of his Teaching, not an expression of any limitation in his Nature.

THE WAY I TEACH

What I do is not the way I am, but the way I teach.

What I speak is not a reflection of me, but of you.

People do well to be offended or even outraged by me. This is my purpose. But their reaction must turn upon themselves, for I have not shown them myself by all of this. All that I do and speak only reveals men to themselves.

I have become willing to teach in this uncommon way because I have known my friends, and they are what I can seem to be. By retaining all qualities in their company, I gradually wean them of all reactions, all sympathies, all alternatives, fixed assumptions, false teachings, dualities, searches, and dilemma. This is my way of working for a time. Those who remain confounded by me, critical of me, have yet to see themselves. When their mediocrity is broken, when they yield their righteous reactions and their strife toward all the consolations of the manifest self, they may see my purity.

Freedom is the only purity. There is no Dharma but Consciousness itself. Bubba as he appears is not other than the possibilities of men.[14]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The function of the Divine Siddhi, its natural force, is not to fulfill our manifest lives, but to dissolve us, absorb us, redirect, turn around, and undo us. As Bubba often explains, the true meaning of the word "sin" is to "miss the mark." The mark or goal that we cultivate and cognize is the one toward which we feel directed by tendency, inclination, even destiny, whether we conceive it in common human terms or in absolutely Divine terms. But the conception makes no difference—to assume the mark in any sense is already to have missed it. Before you even take conscious aim at your "goal in life," you have sinned!

The only way that this constant activity of missing the mark can be undone, and life and consciousness restored to their prior rest and position in very God, is through the potent, graceful activity of the Divine Siddhi itself, operating through the Guru. The vehicle of that process is the love relationship between the Guru and the devotee. It moves not by any kind of action the devotee performs on himself and his "sinful" tendencies, but by an increasing distraction from all such self-meditation and absorption of attention into the Divine itself.

> *Satsang is absolute attachment to the Guru in God. It is maddening attachment, totally distracting attachment, love of the Guru that distracts one from the whole course of conventional life. And if that attachment is not there, if that glorious, ecstatic kind of happiness and distraction by the Guru is not present, sadhana is not possible.*[15]

The ancient legend of Krishna and his gopis illustrates, through allegory, that the attachment of the devotee to the Guru is the principle of spiritual life. The gopis were women who tended and milked the cattle in the fields where Krishna wandered. In spite of themselves they fell in love with him and completely forgot

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

about the cattle. All they wanted to do was to look for Krishna every day. They would wander away and forget to go home, forget to cook for their husbands. They were completely distracted by their love for Krishna.

Eventually Krishna established them in palaces of their own. He would see that each one had everything she needed, and then he would leave, saying that he would return in forty years or so! And of course the gopis wept and suffered and lost weight and had emotional breakdowns, but they did not fail in their attachment to him. His absence was a kind of theatre he created in order to intensify their attachment. He did not reject them. He played upon their attachment to test and intensify it, to make it more absolute and consuming.

These ordinary women were madly involved in an absolute attachment to Krishna, or the Divine manifest in human form, the Guru in God. As a result of this attachment they became more and more ecstatically absorbed in the God-state. And the foundation of the sadhana of Satsang with Bubba is exactly that same attachment. It is attachment to the Guru in God, not a cultic attachment to one who appears in human form, but Divine attachment to the Guru. And if that attachment that overwhelms the life completely and distracts you from the conventional destiny to which you are fitted by your desires and inclinations and circumstances, is not present, then not only is it impossible for sadhana to be fulfilled, but it does not even exist in principle.

The cattle that the women abandoned represent the force of all the tendencies of life. The husbands they left are the fundamental attachment to separated existence, to existence in form, to bodily existence, individuated existence, egoic life on its own, motivated toward survival and distinct from the Divine in Consciousness. Thus in the allegory of the relationship between Krishna and his gopis, we see a fundamental description of the principle of this sadhana. Sadhana is not about bearing down and being motivated by problems in your life, by

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

some sort of philosophical detachment or inclination to have yogic and mystical experiences. Nor is it about doing what you have to in order to produce the changes that you desire. This sadhana is about distraction from the life of tendencies. It is a distraction *from that life. It is not a motivated kind of detachment from your life of tendencies or an effort relative to them or the taking on of conditions to stop tendencies from arising or lifetimes from occurring. It is not a method of the ego. It is not characterized by any kind of effort relative to tendencies—for such a path is completely hopeless.*

There are innumerable conventional paths that involve self-conscious efforts or hopes to produce changes, high and low. These efforts and hopes are themselves forms of tendency that may be realized and suffered in human and other terms. They are not liberating in the fundamental sense. They are not God-realizing. They are themselves expressions of the movement toward fulfillment. The way of sadhana, the way of Truth, is the way of complete distraction from the current of life, from the tendencies that produced your birth and that produce the drama of your existence from day to day. Only when there is complete distraction by the Guru, by the Divine, from the way of life that is producing your experiential destiny, do your tendencies become obsolete. They do not become obsolete when you direct effort against them. It is only when that distraction appears in the midst of the affair of your life that another principle, another process is established.

The gopis simply left the cattle. They did not say, "I'm not going to tend cattle anymore! I'm not going to submit to my desires, my tendencies, my job!" They did not make any such decisions. They simply forgot about the cattle. They were so distracted, so in love with Krishna, so ecstatic, that they just forgot to go home. It never even occurred to them to go home. They never worried about "Should I go home or should I stay here? Should I watch the cattle or should I go look for Krishna? Should I discipline myself?" They did not create a problem out of their sadhana or their relationship to God.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Anybody who approaches me is obliged to involve himself or herself in just this kind of ecstatic spiritual relationship. When that becomes the condition of their conscious existence, fully, through all the conditions of life, then the force of limiting tendencies is weakened, not by doing anything to it, but by virtue of the fact that you are no longer even involved with it. If your relationship to me is essentially ordinary, mechanical, mediocre, not Divine, not a form of contemplation, then you are not doing this sadhana. You are intending to do some other kind of conventional sadhana perhaps, but you are not doing this *sadhana. And you are not involved in the sadhana of Truth, you are not involved in Divine sadhana, you are not involved in that opportunity that is made available in human time through the agency of the Guru.*

The Guru is not simply present to rap out a philosophy or distribute techniques that you may apply depending on your intelligence. The Guru is present to enjoy a Divine relationship with all those who are willing to assume such a relationship, with all those who have the capacity for distraction by the Guru in an absolute love relationship that is more and more distracting. But if that distraction is not present, if that love-desire distraction is not present in an individual's life, then the form of this sadhana is not initiated. It cannot begin. There is no point in even discussing the technical and abstract aspects of the development of this sadhana until the individual has begun to enjoy an ecstatic relationship with me, a spiritual relationship, not one that is in the air, but one that includes the whole of life, that draws the emotion, that awakens the love, that awakens the heart. That distracting relationship that is the principle of this sadhana must be established. On its basis the individual may begin to assume life-conditions, turn them into service to me, and realize that service in more personal and complex ways over time.

The foundation of this path is the distraction that is described between Krishna and his gopis. You must flee to me from all your life, from all your tendencies, not from your obligations—that is not what that allegory is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

all about—but from your tendencies, from the foundation of distraction by yourself, by your own thoughts, your own conditions, your own belongings, your own relationships, your own hopes, your own beliefs, your own thoughts, your own reading, your own mystical intentions, your own philosophical presuppositions. You must flee to me from all that. It must be completely uninteresting to you. It is certainly not interesting to me!

You can't argue a woman into loving you, and you can't argue individuals into the Divine Satsang of distraction. Satsang can be offered and a circumstance provided in which people can approach and become sensitive to that communicated Presence, that Siddhi. But apart from making it available openly and providing a way of approach, there is no argument whatsoever. I am completely without argument. There is nothing I can do to convince you of the Truth of this path, nothing I could do outwardly or verbally that could in itself fundamentally convince you of the relationship you must enjoy with me in order to fulfill this sadhana. It is like falling in love with someone in conventional terms in life. It is not something you argued yourself into doing. It was initially a form of distraction, of absorption, without any reasons, and perhaps if you examined it to find a reason for it, it would seem unreasonable to you, not justified. You know, your lover doesn't look the way you wanted him to look. And in many ways I don't look and act and talk like the conventional, cultic guru is supposed to! . . . I'm not even pretty! . . .[16]

This allegory of the gopis' "Divine distraction" in Krishna is indeed a perfect symbol of the way of sadhana with Bubba Free John. People have spent months, even years, in the community, concerned about their lives and their tendencies, always trying to get it straight, to make themselves perfect, to live the disciplines with great intensity, but always remaining fundamentally unhappy and confused, because they were missing the point. They were still curling inward upon themselves, minding their own cattle and their

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

own limited associations instead of allowing themselves to be distracted by the Divine.

The process is not the same as becoming unconscious of your ordinary responsibilities and existing human relationships. It is just a matter of seeing your concerns drop away; you find yourself simply dwelling on the Guru more and more. You think of him, you want to be with him. You find that the only true pleasure you derive from all the ordinary moments of your life arises when you live those moments in service to him. Not to him as the super-guy who has the ultimate status in the community, but to him as the Divine Master, whose personal presence is the perfect medium of the Divine itself. The intuition of Bubba's Presence is an undeniable connectedness at the heart. It is humor, lightness, clarity. Each devotee reads it through his or her own mechanisms differently than the others, but it is always itself enjoyment and happiness and love. And it gets to the point where you find that nothing else is worth living for. You simply lose interest in whether or not you are living the conditions of spiritual life perfectly, and thus you begin to live them with ease and without concern as handy, tangible expressions of your love for the Guru. To perform any discipline nominally becomes intolerable, even painful, because you have forgotten him.

And the Guru, of course, plays the theatre of this distraction to the hilt. Krishna does not merely satisfy the gopis' longing for him—he plays with it, drawing it out, coaxing and teasing them into more and more mad and ceaseless distraction in him. Bubba works the same way. He lures all who come to him with feeling as devotees, into deeper and deeper longing for intimacy with him. Then he plays on that constantly. So the love-desire we feel for him very often does become painful. When the Guru doesn't invite you to dinner, when he doesn't acknowledge you personally, when he doesn't treat you with apparent kindness, it is painful. As Bubba puts it, the theatre he engages with his intimates is "emotionally effective." There is no way you can defend against it. And in truth you don't want to, because that would amount to a denial of the love that

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

is growing spontaneously and of the increasingly distracting intuition of his true and prior Presence and Divine Nature.

So the whole process is radically unlike any form of self-applied technique, or even any conventional relationship to a mentor or teacher. It is the high theatre of absorbing, wrenching, ecstatic, disorienting, offensive, delicious, and joyous relationship to your own Divine Nature and that of the very world, manifest in familiar human terms and apparent "otherness" as the human Guru, the living Lord.

The sadhana initiated in the Company of Bubba Free John is from the beginning a humorous play of Grace and fire. It marks the "easy" transition from a life of suffering to the inclusive, ordinarily remarkable life of Satsang. Grace is the vehicle, and it is given spontaneously and appropriately when sadhana is lived as loving service to God in the form of the Guru.

THE BELOVED ONE AND THE "BHAKTI CULT"

Of course, we do not always appreciate this theatre of the relationship with the Guru in its true terms, so there are very natural and automatic liabilities that we must take into account in the midst of our lives in Satsang with Bubba. Each of Krishna's gopis was at some point convinced that he loved her, her alone, and her absolutely; but each in turn also had to be weaned of that notion. Just so, the sadhana of life in the Company of Bubba Free John very often will entail that necessary weaning process for you, when you begin suspecting and hoping that you, personally, are the "beloved one," the chosen devotee, the hidden true companion. Anyone who gets even the least attention from Bubba cannot help but feel such thoughts and impulses arise. What is necessary is to do sadhana relative to this obsession, which means that you must act on another basis entirely rather than these rising, exclusive, and limiting emotions, which are actually ways of denying the Guru's real Nature and Work.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Rather than expecting attention *from* the Guru, you must sacrifice your attention *to* the Guru.

The opposite impulse is what Bubba refers to as the "bhakti cult." This is the tendency to make a cultic figure of the Guru, to very deliberately or intentionally behave toward Bubba as if he were literally some kind of spiritual super-guy.

> *The Guru knows very well that individuals will, by tendency, try to create this cult around him which will make him essentially obsolete in his Real function. But he doesn't make a law, bring down ten commandments and say, "Don't do that anymore." It is not fruitful to make a law. He creates a demand, a condition over against which this tendency in individuals is reflected, and that serves life in consciousness, in which there arises not the bhakti cult, not this cultic exploitation of the Guru, but the genuine relationship to the Guru via sacrifice. So the relationship between the true devotee and the Guru is quite a different thing from the cultic bhakti relationship, which does not include any understanding whatsoever, which is just an expression of the need of the individual to become ecstatic through means, to change his state, to exploit his functional life processes to the point of absorption, of self-forgetting. That is only a temporary affair and it doesn't represent the process of Truth at all. It is a lie. It is a form of ignorance.*[17]

There are signs by which you may know your own tendency toward this kind of distraction from Satsang. One of these signs is overt emotionalism in the Guru's presence, which, because it is extreme, distracts you from Satsang. Because these feelings of love for the Guru are so pleasurable and consoling, you may begin to feel that love for the human Guru is equivalent to sadhana, and you may righteously abandon the disciplines of the Guru's demands. The bhakti cult also manifests in the enthusiastic "selling" of the Guru as a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

cultic figure when talking to others about this work, rather than making Satsang available to them in natural, ordinary conversation. Or you may find yourself acquiring rituals to invoke the blissful feelings of love for the Guru's human form, by staring at his body or at his picture, for example, or by obsessively concentrating on his human form through secret methods which seem "devotional."

It is natural for these tendencies to arise in Satsang. But, like everything else that arises, they must be understood. If you indulge these tendencies toward the cult, then you will be forever distracted by your search, even in the Guru's presence. But if you observe them as they arise and surrender them through real attention and service to the Guru, you will enjoy the true relationship with the Guru which is Satsang, Divine Communion.

It is not a matter of taking on some discipline or other and cutting it all out. It is a matter of doing sadhana. So in the midst of all those qualities arising in you, you must study the work, live these conditions, literally serve individuals, and continually return to the position of the Teaching. All of that will act as an offense to your tendencies, and it will produce real symptoms—emotional symptoms, physical symptoms, psychological symptoms, all kinds of symptoms. At the same time that these symptoms are arising, they are themselves representations of self-reflection in consciousness, so they serve the breakdown of the usual trend of conscious life.

So when we get something like a true devotee, we don't see somebody who is just fascinated with the human form of the Guru or involved in an emotionalistic game in which he becomes absorbed in various functions of the life-process. In a devotee we see one who has truly yielded what appears in the form of all his functions to the point of the dissolution of that common principle, of that ordinary activity. One who understands, in other words, is the devotee. And his self-sacrifice or surrender is spontaneous, coincident with his conscious life from moment to moment. That is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

a very different thing from the mere ecstatic, who does not represent the principle of consciousness in his ecstasy.

The phenomena of bhakti, like the phenomena of yoga, and all things that arise in the process of this sadhana are valued from the point of view of the spiritual traditions as somehow the fruits of sadhana, somehow its attainment. These phenomena represent in some sense the acquisition of the phenomena that are equated with Truth. But in the way of sadhana communicated in this Ashram they are not seen in that way at all. They are seen as symptoms, as representations of this crisis. They are a condition in which understanding is appropriate, and that is what makes the sadhana of this Dharma quite another matter than the usual traditional approach to spiritual life.

Those kinds of attachments that originate with one's first approach, one's ordinary human fascinated approach to the Guru, are of the same nature as one's attachments to the aberrated forms of one's functional life in general. So the demand for insight into this simple bhakti movement that has no involvement with consciousness at all, the demand for the understanding of that, the dissolution of that as the principle of one's spiritual life, is not really different from the demand that you enforce dietary restrictions, that you have a job, that you limit your sexual life to a relational condition. All these conditions are of the same nature as this demand to understand the mere and transient impulse to this bhakti cult of the Guru. It is of the same nature. That original and psychological attachment to the Guru is not the spiritual relationship to the Guru at all. It is a form of self-indulgence. It is of the same nature as love of some movie star or sports figure or your parents. It is a form of enthusiasm. It has nothing whatever to do with consciousness. It has nothing whatever to do with real spiritual life or life in Truth.[18]

Bubba has said that there are some who could not realize their sadhana without the grace of an intimate, personal relationship with him. Others, and these are more numerous since he can be intimate with only a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

few, have not the capacity to tolerate the fire of that personal contact, nor does the realization of their sadhana require it.

The theatre of Bubba's play with his intimates serves to intensify everyone's attachment to him, no matter how much personal contact you may have with Bubba. That play is a living demonstration and enactment of the relationship Bubba offers everyone and of the demands that relationship represents to both the eager and the fearful. So the disciplines and gestures of friendship that Bubba bestows on those close to him intensify the sadhana not only of those to whom they are directed but also of those who may be witness to that special theatre or who even hear about it later. No matter how central a participant you may be, in that theatre you experience the undermining of everything conventional in you that is an obstruction to Satsang, or the enjoyment of your true and spiritual relationship to Bubba. You will find yourself becoming jealous, disdainful, superior, full of self-doubt, fawning, and so on, obsessed in one way or another with the extent of your intimacy with Bubba. Thus the play between Bubba and his friends reflects the quality of your own sadhana and serves the realization in you of your prior, fundamental, and always happy relationship with him.

Intimate contact with Bubba is itself a condition for sadhana. It is not merely a conventional pleasure to be enjoyed for its own sake. Bubba has provided specific instructions relative to the sadhana of those who live in his personal presence.

Any individual whose relationship to me involves personal intimacy, who spends time in the relatively conventional atmosphere of my personal company, is obliged to realize that intimacy as one of the conditions of sadhana. The special circumstances of his or her relationship to me must not be grasped for their own sake. It must all be lived in Satsang, as sadhana. If it is not so, then the individual's relationship to me, at least relative to our intimate circumstances, becomes a conventional and karmic occasion. Then, while living in my company most intimately and personally, that

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

individual will inevitably become distracted by intense and arbitrary vital, emotional, and gross level patterns of desire and opportunity. Such people become self-meditative and offensive in my company, and they vacillate between the pursuit and the rejection of me in a constant theatre of desires. Others who, because of their functional obligations to our community, must spend time in my ordinary company, but who engage that company as a conventional occasion, become similarly distracted, self-indulgent, and irresponsible in their relations with me, and the whole of their lives becomes aberrated to that degree. In the end, all of these apparent intimates begin to adapt to a life in the Ashram that skirts the fundamental Condition and conditions of sadhana. Some may even leave the Ashram. Others must be established in conditions of life in the community that are more ordinary, and which allow a formal but not an intimate approach to me.

Therefore, those who are presently or at any time in the future involved in any kind or circumstance of personal intimacy with me should constantly inspect the quality of their living in my company. The Law is fulfilled only if they accept and presently live the special conditions of their intimacy with me as the spiritual discipline and obligation of service to me in person. They, like all others who come to me more formally, must realize their lives as service to me. If it is not so, their relationship to me becomes conventional and obsessive, driving them into forms of karmic theatre, either toward me or away from me. And I will not tolerate their company.

Those who live or at any time work in my intimate or personal company must do so as service to me personally. In that case, they will all the while remain turned to me, under all ordinary conditions, and the glamour of their conventional and born existence will have no force in them. Neither will theatrical circumstances that arise awaken conflicts in their personal relations with me. Such individuals may live with me and serve me without end. They will entirely cease to make demands upon me, or to commit offenses to me, based on the conventional or karmic patterns of their

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

desires. I am the only destiny of those who love and serve me.

Those who truly serve me while engaged in most intimate contact with me will not demand or require personal attention from me. Nor will they become aberrated and confused with frustrations if I do not give them such attention, now or ever. Their attention is in service to me, not to their own circumstances, desires, and the subjective complexes of their minds and lives.

If anyone fails to do such sadhana in my intimate company, I will send him away. I will no longer keep anyone close to me who is not doing this sadhana of personal service to me. Only those who demonstrate the real maturity of sadhana are permitted to fulfill the functions that require even the least personal contact with me. In the past, I kept many immature and irresponsible individuals near me in order to serve, test, and instruct them. Now I expect the Ashram to serve such individuals, and I will tolerate intimacy only with those whose sadhana is founded in service to me, those whose spiritual relationship to me is secure and conscious, who no longer look for me within themselves or anywhere in all the worlds, who find me always in Satsang and serve me with their life of love.

There is a fire in my Company that you will come to know. The Teaching, the Community, and the formalities of a right spiritual approach to me are the way for all who would do this sadhana. Let no one come to me in any fashion that does not conform to this. Let no one approach me in the common way again, for I have renounced the common life, even in this Ashram, to tend my fire in secret. My fire consumes the man, and even, in Truth, the soul. My devotee is enlightened by my fire. The fool and his beloveds are only burned.[19]

Bubba makes himself available to us under all kinds of circumstances in the Ashram, both formal and intimate, for one purpose: to test and perfect the quality of our approach to him. Every occasion in his Company serves that purpose. The Guru is always offering his gift of Prasad, which is himself, fully and openly. Therefore

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

he is always extremely sensitive to the quality of the approach we make to him. And he demands that we be responsible in our relationship to him under all conditions.

> *All devotees should approach me formally, whether in the Satsang Hall or in any moment of the day. Everyone should be mindful not to assume an irresponsibly familiar attitude toward my company. No one should touch my physical body unless I indicate the familiarity first. And no one should approach me, verbally or physically, all of a sudden, but approach calmly and direct themselves to my attention in a conscious and self-controlled manner.*[20]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

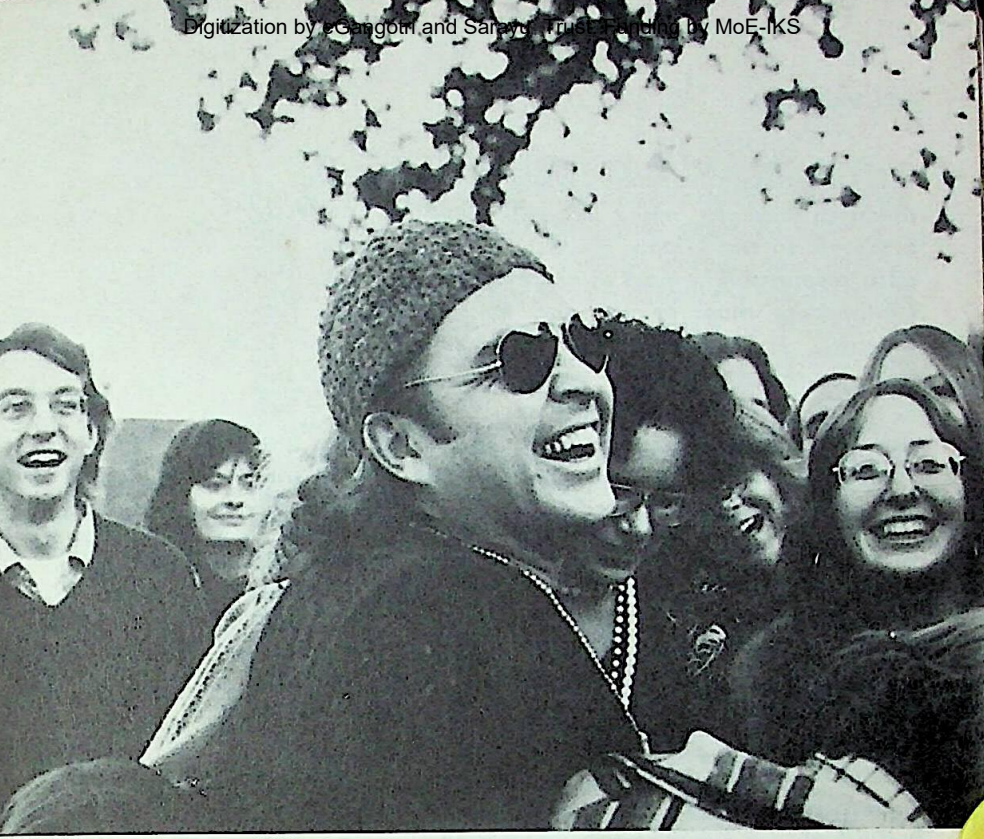
I am incarnating as the Community of my devotees. Those who live in constant Communion with me are the living manifestations of my Presence and Power. I send them into the world and make myself known through them. This is the secret of my spiritual work. My Devotees are the way to me.[21]

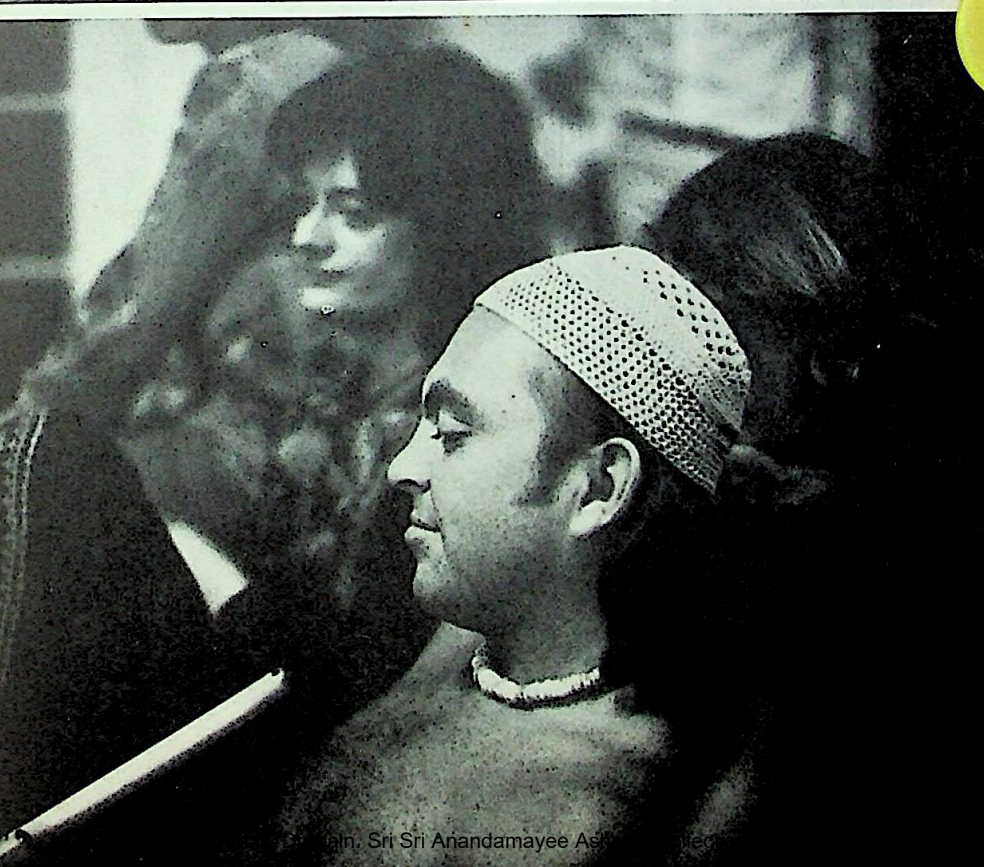
During my life in this human form I am busy drawing devotees to myself by exposing them constantly to the Siddhi and Person of the Lord. I am only showing them the Lord in all the forms of his marvelous and ordinary Activity and in the very Form of his Presence. Bubba Free John is nothing and no one. He does not acquire anything or anyone for himself. He is only an instrument for the revelation of the Siddhi and Person that is God. This Siddhi and Person is always being revealed to my devotees. They see this revelation in the theatre of their lives and in my own form. They see it thus because they are my friends and lovers. Because they are always turning to me, I am always showing them the Lord and communicating his demands, favors, and enjoyments. The Lord is eternally Present and Active, and I am making him known. When this life of Bubba Free John is abandoned, the Person and Siddhi of the Divine will continue to be manifested to my devotees in exactly the same way I have made known to them while I live. And the Community of my devotees will remain in the world as my very incarnation. It will continue to serve as the fundamental and living instrument whereby my work will be extended beyond my lifetime. . . .

It is my expectation that I will not leave behind me a specific individual who can assume conscious responsibility for my work as a whole. Rather, the total Community will share my complex functions at the level of life, and the spiritual functions will be performed through the Community as a whole by the action of the Divine Siddhi which I have regenerated here. . . .

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS





Digitized by Arya Samaj Foundation Chennai and eGangotri

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

I am always working to yield all responsibilities to devotees and to make all my devotees perfectly available to the Divine Work. Therefore, know that your responsibility must at last be perfect. At last this Community must be me and assume all my life-functions. For this reason I have asked for your lives in total, so that you may be assumed by me totally and live only in God to one another. If you accept my demands truly and with humor, then the Siddhi and Person of the very Divine will remain Active and Present in and through this Community throughout the coming age and more.[22]

Life in Satsang is *mutual* sacrifice. It is not only the devotee who yields himself, but also the Guru. The Guru is continually yielding all that he is to all his devotees. To whatever degree he finds them assuming responsibility, whether in life circumstances or in their spiritual work, Bubba yields himself to them. As he put it recently, "I replace you." This is not the "I" of any individual, even some super-individual, but the very and paradoxical "I" of God, the Divine Lord.

Thus, the Community of those who come to Bubba to live in his Company has a very specific and truly sublime purpose: to embody all his functions, both human and spiritual, for the sake of all others and mankind in general, that this appearance of the Divine in human terms might not merely die out a few years or decades after Bubba's passing, but might continue to expand and blossom in the human community at large.

Now there has never been, before this time, a true, full, and ongoing community of devotees. By "devotees" in this context Bubba doesn't mean the general group of all those who come to him, but more specifically that group among them who have realized the fullness of his Teaching and matured perfectly in sadhana. Such people will, like Bubba, live only God. They will know no obstruction in life or consciousness, but will abide continuously in the perfect Radiance and Happiness that is the Divine.

The appearance of a Siddha brings with it no guarantees. In the past other Siddhas, like Jesus and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Gautama, have tried to establish living communities in which the Siddhi of the Divine could flourish. But they have never succeeded in the perfect sense. At best there have been lineages of Gurus within the various traditions, in which one Siddha passed the mantle of his work and the Siddhi of his Presence to another individual. But Bubba has no intention of this limited form of continuance. He has said many times, not just in the statements above, that no single individual will assume his responsibilities after his psycho-physical death. All of his work with us has had two purposes: to establish his Teaching; and to generate the qualities and functions of his own Presence throughout the Community by yielding himself broadly into the lives of his devotees, so that the Teaching is not only known but lived and fulfilled. When these purposes are accomplished, then he may feel free to withdraw his physical presence, because that Form of existence which was served by his human form will be perfectly alive in the Community at large.

That process is already well under way. *No Remedy* represents a culmination of Bubba's Teaching work, with its outlines of the foundation sadhana of the way of Divine Communion and the special Teaching of the way of Understanding, each established in the prior and simpler context of Bubba's fundamental invitation to all, to merely "live with me." More than that, Bubba now has a small but growing group of disciples in whom the Siddhi of his work is securely active. He has said recently that even if he were to die today—and that is a real possibility, because the world is a spontaneous event that he does not manipulate to any apparent ends—the Siddhi would continue its radical work in this group and, through them, in the Community at large. So the eventual appearance of true devotees is assured now in this Community.

In very practical terms, the Community provides an arena, a theatre, for the quickening of sadhana and the dissolution of all limitation and suffering in devotees. The Community exists to communicate the Guru's Teaching and the Condition of Satsang itself, but it does so not as an organization in the world whose

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

aim is to perpetuate itself. It is a community of beings who have come together to do sadhana, who live co-operatively and in mutual dependence, who represent a righteous and happy demand to one another for humor, energy, love. It is one thing to study the Teaching and to perceive in your hidden subjectivity the strategies of avoidance and suffering as Bubba describes them. It is quite another and daring thing willingly to become vulnerable to others so that they also see your strategies and openly demand that you surrender them totally and *live* this devotional life all the time. By entering into a functional, whole life with other members of the Community, you will naturally begin to see and sacrifice all that you represent in limitation. In the Community, devotees not only serve one another in outward or conventional ways, but also, because the Guru has invested himself in them, they spontaneously and without effort or knowledge bring to one another the potent Divine Siddhi that is at the core of this work. So the more your life is spent in contact with others who are living this work, the more intense, potent, and easy will be your own sadhana.

The following excerpt from a talk about the Community of devotees was given by Bubba on July 7, 1974, the date which marks the fulfillment of the initial and foundation phase of his Teaching work in the world and the fundamental securing of his Community.

The Siddhi of our work is perfect. There is no obstruction in the earth, no obstruction in the cosmos, no obstruction in a human being that can stand up to it. Anyone who submits to the Teaching, who lives the discipline of Satsang, will pass through it in a happy, essentially ordinary way. He will have his difficulties, because sadhana requires heat at times, but it will be easy compared to the traditional passage. It is nothing.

It is just a ride. It is very simple. It doesn't have to involve extremes of any kind. It is a natural life in this Community, living the Teaching relative to the stages of your own conscious transformation. The way of the Siddhas is very easy. The traditional seeker must try to pick himself up by his bootstraps and attain the state of

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

God, but when the Siddha appears in the world, he manifests that complete and perfect Realization directly, to all living beings. He asks only for their attention, their surrender, and he becomes them. So they don't have to pass through all of the artifices of their own search for transformation, for release. They live the happy life of present relationship to the Divine, or Satsang, Communion and Non-separation in God. In the midst of all of that, this radical transformation occurs. It appears as all these phenomena, but without the concern and self-cognition of the individual. So the way of the Siddhas is a happy, easy way. It is Divine Grace in the world.

It is also uncommon, because wherever it has appeared, it has been undone in a relatively short time. The Dharma of the Siddhas has never been fully communicated in the past, never totally pictured in its fullness. It has always been adapted to the point of view of the search in dilemma. Because of this, the Community of Devotees was never established in the world. No medium was created for the ongoing realization of spiritual life in the form of the Dharma of the Siddhas. At the end of the lifetime of such a Siddha, there was nothing left to do but resume the path as it always was, and the influence of the Siddha who had appeared gradually ceased to be effective after his death. Perhaps he left a few who were close to him, but they didn't truly know what he was about. All they could do was talk about their experience and radiate a certain quality. Others might experience that radiance in little arbitrary ways, and so create another path out of it, but the Siddhi did not last. The Dharma has never been perfectly communicated in the past. This is the first time.

It has never been done before, so now that it has been done, the one thing necessary is made possible. That is the Community of Devotees, who are the living incarnation of the Guru. That alone makes it possible for the Guru-function to exist perfectly during the lifetime of the Siddha, and to continue afterward perfectly into time. Only if the devotee can be awakened in the Guru's Presence, and made identical to him in Consciousness, can the Teaching be realized.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Merely to come and teach philosophy and some methods does not pass on anything that is alive. There must be that living transformation, that contact with the Siddha in which the overwhelming Divine Process is initiated. When that occurs in a group of people who live with one another and are responsible for that common experience, that common enjoyment, then the Teaching can last. This is the first point in human time in which that possibility has existed. But it is only a possibility. It will come to nothing again unless you become responsible for it in the midst of your own sadhana and responsible for its communication in the world.

DEVOTEE: Bubba, we have been meeting in groups, and more and more I have begun to see the intensity of the Siddhi being manifested through them. Is this the way the Teaching will spread in the world?

BUBBA: Yes. It will occur through devotees' meeting others and taking others into their households and spending time in groups together and sitting in Satsang with them. That is how it will grow. Whenever possible, I will personally be with those who come, but I want also to work through the agency of those who are already with me. When you meet in these groups there are always people there who just came in today. Others have been in the Ashram a couple of months. There are some who have been here for a short time, but who have realized a great deal. There are many degrees of this enjoyment represented by these groups. That is why they are groups, not just one-on-one.

The Siddhi is literally alive in my devotees. When some individual comes to me and I contact him, there is a living connection established, not just, "Hello, Joe, be my friend." There is a Great Spiritual Process. It literally exists. If I have an agent in a person, I can work with him twenty-four hours a day, as long as he maintains his sacrificial attention to me. Wherever these individuals gather with others in the ways I have told you, this Siddhi will be radiant. The same process will be awakened in whatever centers or groups you create.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Wherever individuals do sadhana in the Community, the same process will be awakened.

There will continue to be the same literal contact, the same literal transformation, because this work is not involvement with "Bubba Yogi." There is only the Divine, and that is all Bubba is showing. Because that is so, it is not limited to Bubba's psycho-physical form, his limited mind, and what he can show you in human terms. The Divine work is present here, and it is eternally available to all who become devotees in Satsang with me. The Divine Siddhi is available wherever devotees live, wherever the Community is established. That same process is awakened as long as people do this sadhana and become my devotees. As long as it is done with that kind of simplicity, you will always see these same phenomena, these same states. Everything that I have told you will be exactly the same.

The Community is in itself a form of meditation, a form of devotion. Therefore, when devotees get together they tend to turn one another quite naturally to the Guru, to Satsang. Individually, they tend to become associated with their dramas, their changes, their limitations. But as soon as they enter into one another's company, it is as if they were reminding one another of Satsang, even though they might not outwardly be saying it. That reminder in itself is meditation, so you naturally feel it more strongly at those times of gathering. Also, you are entering into the company of many others in whom this Siddhi is active, perhaps in different ways than it is in your own case. Limitations that may be yours may not be active in some of the others, so you feel the Force of the Siddhi more purely represented to you at those times, because your own limitations are transcended by the Force as it freely appears in others. Just so, there may be areas in yourself that are not obstructed, but which are obstructed in others, and those others feel the Power of Satsang more intensely because of your presence, or the presence of several like you.

When I send people to present the work of the Ashram in public, it will not be one person going out and showing a movie somewhere. I will always send

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

groups of two or more, in order that it be the Community that is going, not just a single person who can get involved in his private number. It is the Community that must move, and there will not be any single individual who in himself represents the work. There won't be any replacement for me. I can't imagine any greater liability than trying to load it all on some person. I lay it all onto the Community, but the Community is very large. There are many qualities in the Community.

What is truly great is the existence of a Community of individuals who will submit to the discipline of living with one another, of loving one another, of creating a common life whose real principle is the absolute Presence or Present Nature of the Divine. Compared to that, the random transformation of a few individuals is nothing. The significance of the Community is absolute, because it means the movement into human terms and human time of the Divine Process. Without the Community, that movement cannot occur. It can occur in however many can have contact with me during my lifetime, but it can't go beyond that if there is no Community. So you must all maintain living contact with the Community as well as with me, and when you have to go out and do things in the world in general, you must understand your limitations, you must do sadhana. There will be difficulties created by that, but that is good.[23]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

> *The form of your relationship to me is the matter that is significant at the beginning and always. You must approach me as a devotee. That is a communication absolutely necessary and absolutely obvious. When someone comes to me in the form of sacrifice, my body opens up. I don't tell it to. I respond to that spiritual being and presence. That is how this Siddhi works. If there is no sacrifice of self, no devotional approach, regardless of all the social niceties that may be there, then this [tapping his chest] does not open. You can come to me for years with your fruit, and there will be no sadhana, no Grace, not even a lesson grasped, because there is a law alive in our relationship. It is mutual sacrifice. . . .*[24]

You cannot "just" live with Bubba Free John. In other words, you cannot just hang out with him in the conventional way, even if you treat him with the deference and respect you might maintain toward any ordinary or even extraordinary human teacher. To live with the Divine itself implies sacrifice, yielding, turning, softening. Your heart must melt in his Presence. It is not difficult. All you have to do is let your head truly touch the floor one time, and he will touch your heart. It is unreasonable, inexplicable. But the fact and truth of it makes reasons unnecessary. When a man falls in love with a woman, he suddenly forgets to figure it out. The same process occurs, only with maddening and world-dissolving intensity, when he falls in love with the Guru and begins to live his life as yielding and surrender to already present God.

What follows in the final sections of *No Remedy* is an elaboration of the "complications" that Bubba has gracefully allowed his devotees, all of whom are indeed very "human" and find it difficult to simply and formlessly maintain their direct, sacrificial attention to him in love. The purpose of this first section has been to lay

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

that foundation—to show the core of the gospel of Bubba Free John in its naked, heart-rending simplicity.

The fundamental condition of Satsang is the same from the day you begin it. It is the same then as it is when you are a perfect devotee. The condition of Satsang is what is significant. All the conditions that change between the time when a person enters the Ashram and the time when he is a perfect devotee are just change. They are factual, they do happen, but they are not the truth of the process. Satsang is the truth of it and its principle. It is not the goal or the end-phenomenon to be attained. It is the prior realization of one who does sadhana.

All the changes that in any way look like attainments are secondary. They are factual enough but they are not the Truth. The Truth is the Condition of Satsang that must be realized in every single moment. That constant realization is happiness. Therefore, the new devotee, if he is realizing Satsang as the condition of life, is just as realized, just as happy, just as much fundamentally established in the Divine intuition as the greatest of all perfect devotees who could possibly exist. The only difference for the devotee is in the conventions, the working out of the conditions that manifest as the theatre of his life. But conventions are not what it's all about anyway. Happiness is what it's all about. Satsang is the Truth and Satsang is the foundation of sadhana, and all those who live such a Condition are already realized in God.

That is the gospel, the happy news, the good news of this Ashram. That is what is communicated, not self-help—do such-and-such and you will be consoled, feel better, change your condition, not feel so threatened, not believe you are mortal. That is not the message at all. That is a cool message. Any hip devil can feel better. But the condition that may be realized today, in this moment, is Truth, is happiness, entirely non-dependent upon changes and conditions of existence. And that is very good news, it seems to me!

All the ways of seeking are bad news, communications to people who are suffering in dilemma,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

who are motivated by dilemma. Bad news is, "Well, if you do such-and-such, you can escape this, you can feel happier in the midst of it, you can get perfect, you can have some visions." That is bad news! From the conventional, hip point of view it sounds like good news. Thus, religious and spiritual communications tend to be identified with that kind of "good" news. The gospel tends to be associated with "good" news of that kind, promising that things can get better, Christ will come again, or something sublime will happen on down the line.

The real good news is that none of that is necessary—it is all bullshit! Of course, changes are good from a conventional point of view, even appropriate. But the good news is that none of it is necessary, that the Condition that is happiness is free of this dilemma and all motivated existence, the endless service to your suffering, the endless self-meditation and progress, that all of that is completely unnecessary and can in this moment be side-stepped, obviated, undermined, and completely by-passed in the way of real sadhana. The real or true way of sadhana is to assume the Condition that is Satsang, to live that Condition constantly, now, in this moment, and now in this moment. Secondarily, sadhana also makes all the rest of the bullshit obsolete and creates all kinds of changes of state. That is factual. But the Truth is this Condition, and that's the good news.[25]

SATSANG IS NOT DEPENDENT ON YOUR ABILITY TO BE ALWAYS IN MY PHYSICAL PRESENCE

To provide a summary of the relationship between the devotee and the Guru, we present the following article which Bubba wrote for new devotees in the Ashram.

In the "Introduction to the Gospel of the Siddhas" I have written: "While the Guru lives he teaches that

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Satsang which can be enjoyed by all even after his death, not in the special form it may be enjoyed by a relative few during his lifetime, but which could have been enjoyed by all prior to his lifetime. He acts to help his disciples and devotees to realize this form of Satsang even while he lives in the world."[26] *My psycho-physical form is mortal, a function of the worlds. It is the instrument whereby the way of Satsang is being communicated at this time. I welcome all my disciples and devotees to come and be with me as often as possible while I live. But it is impossible to enjoy that form of Satsang twenty-four hours of every day. And this mortal one will come to rest some day. This psycho-physical form in which you recognize me is the fundamental instrument for the initial communication and generation of our work, but it is in fact only a secondary instrument of Satsang. The fundamental instrument of Satsang is the Siddhi that is eternally and radically Present. While I live I will be active in this psycho-physical form for the sake of this Siddhi. Therefore, it is appropriate for all devotees to come into this mortal one's presence whenever possible. But my work is to help you realize this Siddhi that is my true and eternal Function. I am here to establish a perpetual community of devotees who will live in perfect Satsang, the condition of my eternal Function. The Guru is an eternal Siddhi or Function of the Divine Reality. The human Guru is the demonstration of that Siddhi, whereby men are renewed in the true condition of life, which is Satsang.*

Since it is this eternal Siddhi that my devotees enjoy, there is no fundamental limitation involved in the fact that no one *can be in my psycho-physical presence twenty-four hours of every day. Indeed, most of you see me only on occasion. After my death, no one will ever see me, but my work will continue in the community of my devotees, those who know me as the Siddha beyond conditions.*

Thus, I want you to know how to live the true form of this Satsang, that form of Satsang which pertains before my life, during my life, whether or not you are in my psycho-physical presence, and after my death.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

"Sravana" or hearing the word of the Guru is the beginning and ongoing necessity of the way of Satsang. Therefore, always study the written and spoken Teaching which I have given among devotees. Do this each day.

The fundamental response of one who listens to the Guru's word and knows him as Guru is surrender. Therefore, moment to moment, surrender to me all your seeking, the very sense of your separate self, all thoughts, all desires, every circumstance, even your body. The true devotee surrenders all of this always and turns to his Guru as the Present Divine Reality and the Siddhi or Function of Truth. To surrender the whole drama, content, experience, and destiny of Narcissus to the Guru is not to be concerned at all with these things themselves, or even the effects of the surrender. Rather, it is to be turned to the Guru constantly, without concerns for what is always arising.

The surrendered disciple and devotee of the Guru is responsible for abiding always in that Satsang or unobstructed relationship to the Guru. Therefore, he must maintain the appropriate psycho-physical conditions which the Guru requires in the case of all who turn to him. Do this always, freely, and with humor.

Live in conscious Satsang always. All of my devotees (all who turn to me) live with me. All of my devotees serve me, and I serve them. This is what I mean by Satsang in life. Even those who cannot often be in my psycho-physical presence while I am alive still live with me always. But while I live, come into my psycho-physical presence whenever possible. After my death, my outer or worldly functions will be the responsibility of the Community of my devotees. In those days, come and be in that Community as often as possible. My Community is my outer form and function. And after my human death, come to my samadhi site and other places I have designated for Satsang and meditation as often as you would have come to be in my psycho-physical presence.

My promise to devotees is the same that all the Siddhas have declared: I am with you now, as I have always been, and I will always be with you. My Func-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

tion is without beginning or end. The work I do in my psycho-physical form is temporary. It is done in order to reawaken the way itself. Therefore, my human life is only a moment. But the purpose of my work while alive is to establish the way of Satsang for the coming generations of mankind. And the special inheritance of my devotees, those who are restored to Truth, will be the Community, the Teaching, and the Living Places I will create and reserve among you.

Suggested Readings:

Garbage and the Goddess:

pages 89-100.
pages 101-128.
page 136 (BUBBA: Everybody been feeling. . .) to page 147.
page 361 (BUBBA: Yes. The Presence of the Divine. . .) to page 367.

The Knee of Listening:

page 262 (Unqualified existence. . .) to page 271.

The Method of the Siddhas:

pages 126-146.
pages 148-178.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

2

THE COMPLICATIONS OF SADHANA: THE WAY OF DIVINE COMMUNION

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The Lord of all the worlds is Radiant before you. If you will simply direct yourself, with whatever power or capacity you can find within yourself, to the remembrance of the Divine in my Company, the Services of God will be given to you.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

When a person lives in Satsang, over time the force of the Guru's Presence begins to fill him with lightness, radiance, a humorous lack of concern for the stuff of his own life. And he begins to realize that Bubba is merely stating the factual truth when he says that the moment Satsang begins is itself perfect God-Realization. It is literally true, because that moment is the simple, conscious regeneration or intensification of the happiness at the core of all existence. It may not necessarily, and certainly does not immediately, transform the whole quality of our psycho-physical condition. God-Realization itself has no implications for the conventions of our lives. It is simply life in God, and life *in* God is already life *as* God.

But because we tend always to remain convinced and confused by the binding force of conventions, of earthly, personal, human, even spiritual events and conditions, we do not assume Satsang to be what it truly is. We do not assume that it is already Divine Realization. We assume that it is less than that, and so remain prey to the force of our own habitual distraction by the conventions of existence.

Thus, the Guru not only lives with his devotees in God, he also yields to them prescriptions for forms of action and intelligence that will serve their realignment to him in God—that will serve, in other words, their realization that in Truth no such complications to life in Satsang are or were necessary from the beginning! It is an entirely humorous event. He has already assumed their realization in Truth, he knows it is already the case—there is only God!—but he is willing to concede to their lesser assumptions. So he gives them sadhana to do, functional disciplines to perform in relation to him, to aid their remembrance of him in God.

Bubba Free John spent the first five years of his Teaching work communicating a special and unique Teaching among men, which is the way of Un-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

derstanding. From the beginning Bubba founded this radical path of intelligence in Satsang, or Divine Communion. More recently, once that path of Understanding was secure in a small group of his disciples, Bubba felt free and was moved to offer a different path of approach to devotees, a path of action called the way of Divine Communion. The way of Divine Communion is a direct path of radical reliance on Grace in Satsang and surrender of all one has and is to the Guru, without the severe and critical necessity for intelligent insight that characterizes the way of Understanding. It is the foundation approach for all who enter into relationship to Bubba. The way of Understanding is an adjunct to that path for those who are particularly (and karmically) inclined to the qualities of inspection and intelligence that characterize the conscious process of understanding. So the way of Understanding is a possible, but not necessary, development of the way of Divine Communion. There are and will be devotees who pass through all the crises and realizations of spiritual life without ever taking on the explicit practices and technical responsibilities of the way of Understanding, but who only continue to perfect a life of submission and sacrifice to Divine Grace through the way of Divine Communion.

In the following brief essay, Bubba distinguishes the two fundamental ways in which his devotees come to enjoy real liberation in his Company.

You are not suffering what is happening or has happened or will happen to you. Your suffering is your own activity. And you are suffering from what you are doing. Thus, you also suffer from what happens to you. Release comes by Grace in the Company of the Guru in God either by radical, discriminative insight, wherein you abide in the prior Condition or Only God, or by absorption in the true or God-Condition via a new or true action which tends to make the old action of suffering obsolete.

Since suffering or ignorance is not itself a matter of your conditions or what has happened, is happening, or will happen to you, but a matter of your own present

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

activity, which is contraction, self-definition, the avoidance of relationship, release is not a matter of a change in your conditions or circumstances. Liberation or salvation involves not a change in your conditions but a transformation of your relationship to or participation in forms of action. Bondage or suffering is identical to a form of your own activity. Liberation or salvation is release from the force and implications of all action.

There are fundamentally two ways in which an individual's relationship to his own action is transformed in my Company. In the way of Understanding one moves by a process of critical insight toward the intuition of the Divine and prior Condition. In the way of Divine Communion one duplicates from the outset a form of action which is perfect or true by design, and it is, by degrees, made perfect and true by Grace. But both ways are essentially founded in this true action or Divine Communion from the beginning, since all must, via an intelligent, intuitive, heartfelt, and practical response, become my devotees in order for sadhana to begin and to be fulfilled.

This true action is devotion, or continuous return of self and all its contents and circumstances to the Divine Condition. Such realized devotion is itself Samadhi, Bhava, perfect Intuition, Love, and Bliss. It is the perfect fulfillment of the Law, which is sacrifice. Each must turn to me, making the constant natural effort of self-giving and loving service, and I become his servant in return. And each, in the due order of his appropriate sadhana, will realize his sacrifice more and more perfectly as God-Realization.

The way of Understanding involves critical insight and technical responsibility for the action that is suffering and ignorance. The way of Divine Communion, which is the foundation and ongoing principle of the way of Understanding, involves a counter-action or other action, wherein the action that is suffering is made obsolete by non-use. In both cases, the action that is suffering and ignorance dissolves at last and there is only the no-action of Bhava Samadhi, which is prior establishment in only God or Real Consciousness.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Salvation or liberation is not, then, itself a kind of action in the conventional sense. It is not identical to any "act" of devotion. In perfect devotion there is no actor (no defined self or self-position) and no Object. The Condition that is Satsang itself must be realized from the beginning by such intuitive devotion. The course of sadhana involves forms of action or conventional responsibility. But the realization itself, which is the Condition of Satsang or Divine Communion, is prior to action and re-action. Realization is not the action of love, but the intuition that is Love, or Conscious Bliss, the Condition of all conditions.

Such realization becomes your enjoyment in this moment not by exclusion, separation, and escape into some other condition. Realization or release in Truth is not any solution in conflict with the whole of what arises or any condition that arises. Rather, it is a matter of realizing the true nature of whatever presently arises. All that arises is only a modification, not other than your present, real, true, and eternal Condition. There is only God. In this realization in the present there is no conflict, no fascination, no separation, no self, no knowledge. There is no interest in any implication or alternative or condition in itself. One fulfills the conventions and even lives with great intensity, but there is only God, and attention is dissolved in Consciousness.[1]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Because Bubba had spent the whole early phase of his Teaching work developing and communicating the radical way of Understanding, it at first came as quite a surprise to his students and disciples in that path when he announced the new path he was making available, the way of Divine Communion. But very quickly they came to perceive this gesture of the Guru as a boundless act of Grace, a way of opening his arms to all who may be moved to come to him as devotees, no matter what their karmic limitations. Here is the original letter that Bubba delivered to his Community on December 1, 1975, announcing the way of Divine Communion.

For more than five years I have been at work with individuals in intimate company to communicate, demonstrate, and awaken in them the sadhana of the way of Understanding, which is described in all of the previous literature of my Teaching work. This way is the special form of instruction which was implied in my own birth and sadhana. Only recently have I found, in the case of a small group, the evidence of maturity which is the necessary foundation for the realization of this way. I have given this group of disciples all essential responsibility for the future management and general instruction of my Ashram. I have completely put into writing all of the necessary instructions relative to the final and technical realization of this way of Understanding. Therefore, except for the actual instruction of mature disciples and devotees, my special Teaching work is, in its essentials, complete. My special Teaching work has been a service for a few. The way of Understanding is not itself a saving gospel that can affect the world at large. It is a way for the special few who were given to me in the spiritual planes above this world before my present birth. Those few were with me then, and, because their karmas obliged them to be born on earth again, I have taken the present birth to continue my work with them. The way of Understanding has thus been established as a path on earth, and it will

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

remain here, through the responsible services of my devotees, for all future individuals who have attained the spiritual status above this world of those whom I have presently been born to serve. Apart from such individuals, for whom the karmas of the lower planes are weak, there are relatively few who, even by virtue of sheer sympathy and persistence, will be able to adapt to this difficult way. It requires an intelligence that constantly exceeds the power of life's theatre, and an attachment to the spiritual intimacies and disciplines of my Company that cannot be attained by mere effort or conventional inclination.

But I am willing to serve all beings in this place. My special work has been for a few, but I am an incarnation of the Divine Form, and my special work, now fulfilled, can stand by itself in my Presence. I have become willing to assume a more general role for the sake of the spiritual life or salvation of men.

All who come to me may participate in the eternal Grace of God. It is not necessary for every one to belong to the special class of individuals whom it is my unique obligation to serve in the way of Understanding. For those few, sadhana in my Company is like the resumption of a course of study after a period of recess. Such individuals are already used to my discipline, my wildness, and the special character of my appearance and play. But others cannot identify me in this manner, and they are sensitive and available only to the most direct expression of the universal and unqualified Divine in me. For these many, who are only now becoming available to sadhana or life in Communion with the Divine Person, I am willing to do service in another way, which is the simple way of loving submission and attention to God.

Therefore, many will come to me, and all are welcome, who are simply suffering the common failures of life. To all of them, I simply say, come to me happily, with the urge to happiness, to peace, to love, and to a better realization of your born life. The Lord of all the worlds is Radiant before you. If you will simply direct yourself, with whatever power or capacity you can find within yourself, to the remembrance of the Divine in

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

my Company, the Services of God will be given to you.

It is not necessary or even possible for you to "believe" in God or know the Character of the Divine Person. But if you can see that you do not exist by your own creature power, and if you can begin to consider the alignment of your life with the unspeakable Source or Condition that is truly responsible for and ultimately identical to your very existence, then you can do the sadhana or spiritual practice of Communion with God. I urge and welcome all who can manage such sympathy, and who feel the contact with Grace in my Company, to accept the simple and pleasurable disciplines I will recommend, to visit me in my Ashram or any place where I come, either in person, or in the form of my disciples and devotees, and to live with me in my Community.

For those who would thus adapt themselves at least with a little of their lives, I recommend a way that is easy to conceive and fulfill. Simply turn to God through me. Submit, surrender yourself to God through me. Love and receive God through me. I am not what I appear to be. I am a Presence you will come to know. That Presence is only God. If you will devote or sacrifice yourself to me, I will transform your knowledge, and you will realize me at last as your very Self and the Condition of all that appears.

You should assist this process of Divine Communion through two natural disciplines, one which is practical, based in ordinary action, and one which is spiritual, based within the heart or boundless psyche.

The practical discipline which assists this turning or Communion is the practice of minimizing the degree and kinds of exploitation of life in your own case and bringing your life into coincidence with the special psycho-physical laws of manifest existence as well as the great Law or Principle, which is sacrifice. This involves, to whatever degree you are able, participation in a life of devotional service to Guru in God through all your actions, including devotional singing and personal attention to me for my Darshan, my Prasad, and my Teaching; the study and simple listening to teachings about God and Divinely realized individuals; the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

maintenance of a productive work life; the keeping of a clean, orderly, healthful, and pleasurable environment for yourself and your companions; the adoption of a healthful and "harmless" diet (an essentially lacto-vegetarian diet that involves, to whatever degree possible, non-killing of higher creatures, who possess the sense of independent existence); the confinement of sexuality to a single partner; and a continuous, active orientation toward human community and energetic, compassionate, and loving service to the common life. This practical discipline should be fulfilled by you to whatever degree you find the capacity in yourself. To whatever degree you fail or find yourself unable to fulfill this discipline at any time, simply observe yourself, be easy, be full of enjoyment, make your actions at least an indulgence that does not harm others, and continue to turn to God through me and in the form of my Presence with feeling, from the heart. The more you mature in my Company, the more you will fulfill this discipline. The more you fulfill it, the more you will see of your turning from the Divine Condition. And the more you see of this turning away, the more responsible you will become for your turning to God through me.

The spiritual discipline that should, at a later stage, begin to accompany the practical discipline of this way of Communion is a voluntary exercise of the remembrance of God from the heart that coordinates the body, the life-force, and the mind with the breath. Thus, sit with me, or in privacy, as a formal responsibility, once or twice a day. Remember me, surrender to me with love, yield your life and circumstances to God through me, and, at random, breathe the Presence of God, with attention to the Divine as the Reality or Real Person which is prior to or beyond the body, the mind, and the world. Breathe with your heart. With random exhalations surrender your self, your mind, your life, your desires, your body, and all the conditions of your existence from your heart to God through me. Then, with random and following inhalations, with your heart and your whole being, receive, draw upon, and become full of the Presence, Power, and Consciousness of God through me. Whatever you yield from the heart will,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

over time, be replaced by Divinely transformed conditions and/or by intuitions of the significance of any limitations you must bear in time and space.

The spiritual practice may, at a later and mature stage of your meditation in my Company, when you know me clearly in the form of constant Presence, be expanded at times to include heartfelt remembrance of God through the Name or Mantra of God. I ask that you use the Name "God," and not any traditional mantric Name, such as Ram, Krishna, Jesus, or Om. "God" is the Name of God with which all men are familiar and to which they are naturally attached through body, breath, mind, spirit, and soul. Therefore, at random, with surrender in exhalation, inwardly or vocally, and with feeling and love in the heart, breathe the Name "God." Likewise, with random inhalations, feel and breathe the Divine Presence with the heart with the Name "God." This is the spiritual practice of the "God-Mantra" or "God-Name."

These represent the essential disciplines of the way of Divine Communion, which is the foundation of sadhana in my Company. The spiritual practice of the breathing of God from the heart will, over time, show itself to you as a process in which you are breathed and lived and loved by God. The spiritual practice and the practical disciplines should both be exercised more and more under whatever conditions arise in life. The spiritual practice itself need not be reserved only for those occasions when you sit with me or sit in private, but it should be exercised at random, at any time, while awake, or even while dreaming or asleep. Allow it to develop and reveal the Divine to you according to its own pace. Simply use the spiritual exercise and the practical disciplines as a way of Communion with God through me under all conditions. When your devotion is perfected, you will find no self, no world, and no other God, but only God.

Those who would do this sadhana or practice of heartfelt Divine Communion should do it in my personal Company or Presence as often as possible. They should come to me in my Ashram frequently, and also sit for instruction in the company of my disciples and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

devotees, who will at times travel about or present themselves in the places of my Ashram in order to serve those who are interested in living this practice.

My Ashram Community will, in the future, be composed of all who come to me. Some will approach me solely and simply through this way of Divine Communion and mature entirely through this practice in my Company. Others will, after a time, build the sadhana of Understanding upon this devotional foundation. In any case, I am Present always for the sake of anyone who comes to me, and I yield to each the Grace or consideration he or she requires in God.[2]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

In the letter describing the way of Divine Communion, Bubba announces that he is willing to receive everyone whose approach to him is made in the spirit of sacrifice, since that approach fulfills the Law. Divine Communion is the mutually sacrificial relationship between the Guru, or the Divine Person, and his devotee, the process by which the devotee realizes that everything, even existence itself, is sacrifice.

> *Everything is yielded. Everything becomes this meal. When you have realized that principle, only then do you realize your real Nature, which is prior to all appearance. There is great blissfulness in that realization because it is not dependent on anything. Everything can be eaten then. Everything can be undone because you live in that Condition that is not touched, that is not part of the process of the worlds. Then you are truly happy. There is nothing that needs to be held on to any longer.*[3]

We tend to view life as a process of attaining, acquiring, and grasping, but in its true form, lived in God, all life is a constant yielding and sacrifice. Sadhana is simply a realignment with the process that is sacrifice. Thus, sacrifice is already your destiny. It is already the lawful affair of reception and release, of birth and death, of inhalation and exhalation, of the sacrament of Prasad.

All life forms are essentially systems of life-force, including those that are visible to us on this earth plane, from human beings to plants and animals, and also including those we cannot see. All systems of life-force have the same source, the same foundation, and are fundamentally of the same condition. They are part of our process and can be consciously so. We are mutually involved with all of them. We limit them, we suffer them, and we seek to fulfill ourselves through them,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

even through those we cannot see. Similarly, they seek to fulfill themselves through us, through the communication of force, the mutual sacrificial activity. This truly is life.

The whole scheme of cosmic existence is a vast sacrificial system of mutuality, mutual exchange, transformation from one state to the next. While you are alive in this apparent form you live as a continuous process of transformation of state. Death is just another form of that same sacrificial process. We are the meal of this universe, and all beings are food. There is no living entity that is not food, perhaps for some other living entity, but ultimately for the vast cosmic process of energy transformation. Everything terminates, everything is transformed. This is the law of life, not of death. By taking creatures or plants for food we are just involving them in that sacrificial process. We are also being used, devoured. We may be butchered if we aren't conscious, and so become domestic fodder for some invisible race or system of energy, some life-system. Or we may become conscious and live the sacrificial process that is our humanity with absolute awareness of what it is.

In that sacrifice we are endlessly renewed and enlivened, because that process is the spiritual process. We aren't properly the meal of some invisible race of giants, but we are properly a sacrifice into the Divine Light. Despite this, we are continually being sacrificed to our own unconscious and subconscious life and to subtle, invisible influences of various kinds. The unconscious man, Narcissus, is like a sheep. The conscious man lives the sacrificial process, lives the universe itself as this great sacrificial process in every moment proceeding from the Divine. Every *moment. And in every moment he makes the sacrificial return to the Divine. You become consciously a participant in that endless cycle, descending and ascending life, in which life is manifested and returned again to its source.*

That is not the law only of death. You don't only return to God when you die. In every moment you are returning to God. This sacrificial process is going on in every moment. Our human, physical death is simply an

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

incident of that sacrificial process. Those who live that sacrificial process while alive lose the common fear of death, which is maintained by our social magic, our experience, our conscious, unconscious, and sub-conscious life.

In one who is truly conscious, life is no longer a mystery. He breathes the very Light of God. He sees the alchemical transformation of the Divine into life in every moment and sacrifices himself in return. He only lives in God and everything is obvious to him. His life is not the search for God. Life isn't intended to be a mystery that leads to the discovery of God at the millenium, at enlightenment, or at any other point in the future. Life is founded in God, and is meant to be lived in God, happily and without mystery.

The evolution of man, if that is something actual at all, isn't going to be achieved gradually from eon to eon. It will be produced by mankind's becoming conscious, living already in the Divine, so that the Divine process can be fully realized in life. It isn't by going toward God that we evolve but by standing in the Divine already, already happy. It is not yogic bliss that we are seeking to attain, some psycho-physical manipulation of the life-force. It is to be already and presently happy regardless of the apparent condition. All the manipulation of the life-force is God's concern. Life in Truth is to be already happy without any reasons whatsoever, not to be hoping to be happy by moving into samadhi.[4]

THIS WAY IS THE WAY OF ACTION

The principal quality of the sadhana of Divine Communion is action, but it is not the action of search and acquisition. It is constant sacrifice. You do not yield because you want to attain Divine Communion. You yield yourself because Divine Communion is already your very Condition, prior to the distraction that your "self" represents! Because you are already being held by

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

God, you can relax your compulsive graspings and rest in the Radiance of Truth.

Mutual sacrifice is the nature and expression of the relationship between the Godman, the Siddha-Guru, and his true devotee. The devotee gives his life, all that he has and is, to the Guru; and the Guru gives the gift of his very Nature, Satsang, the Divine gift of Truth and Light, to his devotee. That gift of the Guru is a miracle beyond the most far-fetched hopes of a man. But that is all the Guru is alive to do, to give that gift to all who are capable of receiving it. From the beginning the Guru looks only to establish and secure this relationship with the devotee through which this transforming Grace can move. Thus, life with Bubba Free John is truly a Graceful process, and at the same time by definition a Lawful one. You cannot receive the Gift that is always offered unless you yield your hold on your self and open your hands.

This way is a way of action. Of course it involves intelligence, but not as a specific development of a way of sadhana. It is also founded on insight, on a maturing process of insight, essentially an insight relative to action. The beginnings of sadhana are the same in everyone—a sense of the failure of life, of the inherent suffering of life. But then, when the individual comes into my Company and lives with me as a devotee, he or she begins to see how action and experience are forms of turning away from me. Insight arises relative to your life-action, to your life-experience, to your relationship to me in living terms. What you see as turning from *me, you can yield if you turn* to *me. Turning to me is the yielding of it. Therefore, there is intelligence at the foundation of that way, not developed in the apparently complicated elaboration of the way of Understanding, but a similar intelligence. You see the turning away and you turn to me. That is the simple action.*[5]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

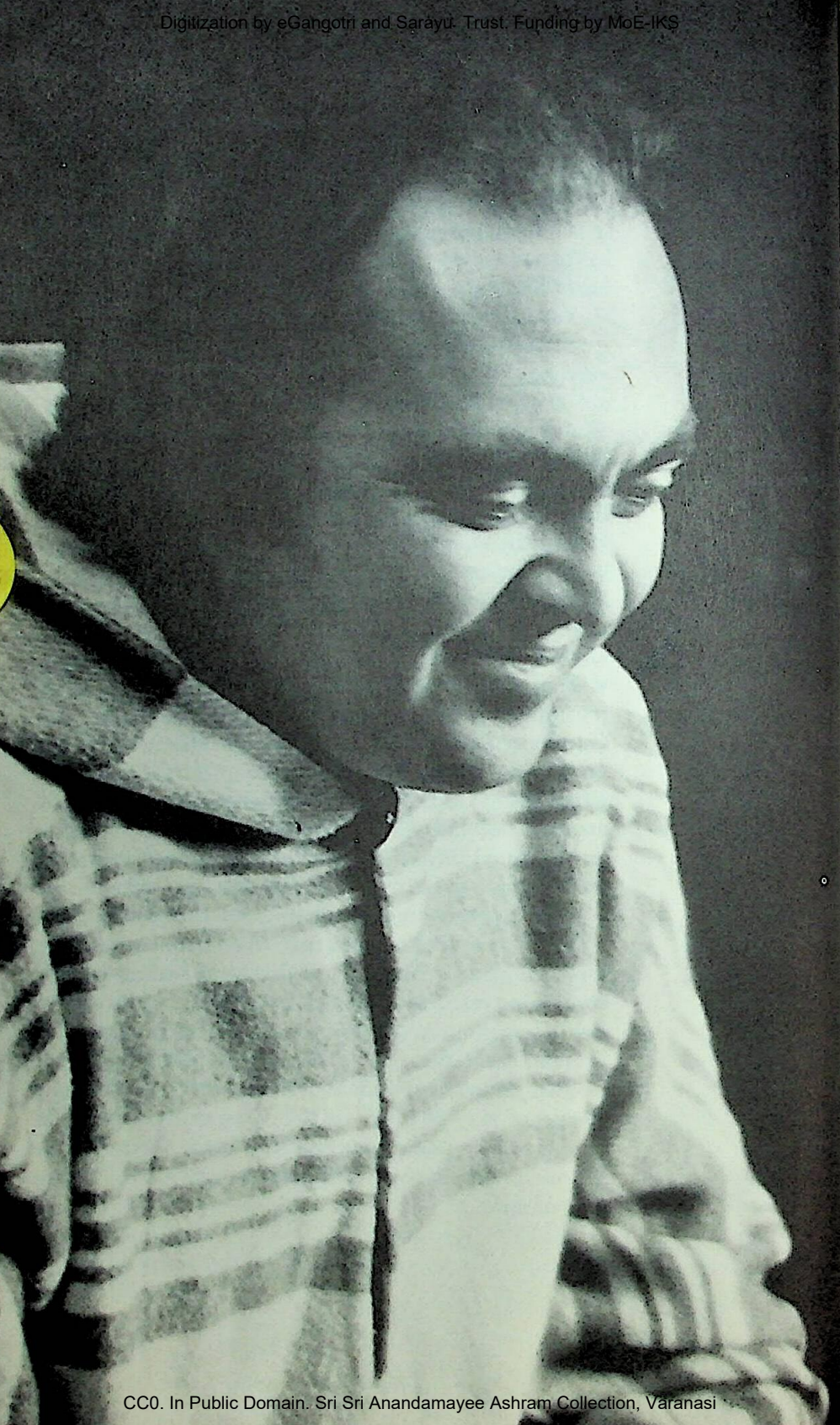
> *"I will serve those who serve me." That statement communicates the nature of the Law, of the Divine Process. It is not a matter of your lying back while everything happens to you and you become enlightened. There is a participation that must be alive in the individual and that fulfills this law of sacrifice. Then my own work can be known. It cannot otherwise be known or truly felt.*[6]

The way of Divine Communion is a necessary and compassionate offering. It is a way of action, but not a way of motivation or seeking of any kind. It is founded in the immediate Presence of God in, as, and through the Guru, and not in any form of dilemma or assumed lack of the Divine Presence. The real action here is the Guru's action, it is God's action—and it is Grace. The devotee accomplishes nothing with his sacrifice. It is not a form of righteousness that wins him some kind of Divine voucher for Grace. It turns him, renders him wide open, and leaves him dependent and defenseless in the already present Intensity of God. Therefore, the Guru considers the action of his devotee to be fulfillment of the Law, and the devotee is served and gifted with God's Grace instantaneously. The Guru assumes responsibility for the devotee and gives of his Grace completely. It is a radical devotional approach that is already fulfilled and complete in God.

For all who would live with Bubba Free John there is one demand that must be met, one factor that assures the fulfillment of the Law, and that is the realization and continuing maturation of a devotional life of service to Bubba, honoring, enjoying, and feeding upon his Presence as Guru. *No Remedy* provides a basic introduction to the principles that inform the awakening of such a way of life. The following section, on "The Practical Discipline," outlines the basic forms of life action undertaken by all who do the sadhana of Divine Communion.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

You should assist this process of Divine Communion through two natural disciplines, one which is practical, based in ordinary action, and one which is spiritual, based within the heart or boundless psyche.

The practical discipline which assists this turning or Communion is the practice of minimizing the degree and kinds of exploitation of life in your own case and bringing your life into coincidence with the special psycho-physical laws of manifest existence as well as the great Law or Principle, which is sacrifice. This involves, to whatever degree you are able, participation in a life of devotional service to Guru in God through all your actions, including devotional singing and personal attention to me for my Darshan, my Prasad, and my Teaching; the study and simple listening to teachings about God and Divinely realized individuals; the maintenance of a productive work life; the keeping of a clean, orderly, healthful, and pleasurable environment for yourself and your companions; the adoption of a healthful and "harmless" diet (an essentially lacto-vegetarian diet that involves, to whatever degree possible, non-killing of higher creatures, who possess the sense of independent existence); the confinement of sexuality to a single partner; and a continuous, active orientation toward human community and energetic, compassionate, and loving service to the common life. This practical discipline should be fulfilled by you to whatever degree you find the capacity in yourself. To whatever degree you fail or find yourself unable to fulfill this discipline at any time, simply observe yourself, be easy, be full of enjoyment, make your actions at least an indulgence that does not harm others, and continue to turn to God through me and in the form of my Presence with feeling, from the heart. The more you mature in my Company, the more you will fulfill this discipline. The more you fulfill it, the more you will see of your turning from the Divine Condition. And the more you see of this turning away, the more responsible you will become for your turning to God through me.[7]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

You are asked to live this practical discipline to whatever degree you are capable. Hopefully, you will live it absolutely and in the spirit and humor of Satsang. But there are people whose physical and emotional karmas are such that if they tried, at least in the beginning, to live the practical conditions of Bubba's work absolutely, they would forget Bubba completely! They would become so obsessed with trying to get their lives together, and so gloomy with their continual failure, that they would effectively shut themselves off from the simple happy communication of his constant spiritual Presence. "Would" is the wrong word—this is what many, many members of the Community *did* do, to one degree or another, during the early years of Bubba's work.

But it is better to be happy in Satsang than concerned about anything whatsoever. So Bubba is willing for people to maintain their lives in his Company even while they may be enduring a necessary period of maturing relative to the affairs of life itself. As long as their approach continues to be appropriate, direct, and free of repetitious cycles of doubt and antagonism, Bubba welcomes them to keep his Company. Over time all are expected to mature beyond their initial capacity, or incapacity, to fulfill the practical disciplines.

Even that maturing process is not in itself a form of success or attainment. As you adapt to the conditions or practical disciplines, you will naturally see the ways of your turning from the Guru, your inability to meet his requests, the futility of your own strength and intelligence. But hopefully you will also begin to "use" the Guru, to need him. This is a crucial point in your relationship to Bubba. Before you began doing sadhana, your life had begun to fail. But now you find yourself failing even at sadhana! From the conventional point of view that failure implies a weakness on your part that undermines life in Satsang. Such failure can appear negative or "wrong," but actually it is simply useful. You have entered the Guru's Company, and you have heard his plea, "Let me live you!"

When you have gotten tired of trying to get free or find God, when you have gotten tired of

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

being motivated in that way, then you may begin to feel your game. Then you may become available to the Guru, first perhaps by coming across the Teaching in some form. You begin to see something about it all by considering the Teaching. Finally, you enter into relationship with the Guru. In fact, he enters into relationship with you. The process of Satsang is not one in which you are given a remedy for your problem, a cure that you are supposed to perform on yourself, but one in which the fundamental Condition is that prior relationship, that Divine Communion. It is not a matter of meditating yourself to the point of realization. The actual Siddhi of the Divine is activated in that relationship, and that Siddhi does the meditation. That Siddhi is *the meditation.*

The Guru assumes your enlightenment. He doesn't mechanically enlighten you, or give you something to do to enlighten yourself. He absorbs you. He is you to begin with, but the Guru in human form consciously assumes your Divine state in every function in which you appear. He assumes it in your very cells and literally, actively lives you. The Guru literally meditates you. He is in a position to do so, since he is you. The mystery of that process is how this kind of spiritual life is generated and fulfilled. It is fulfilled from the beginning. That Satsang is perfect. The devotee, a piece at a time, begins to become aware of the perfection the Guru has already generated in his case. [8]

You only submit more and more. You can't do *this absolutely. It is a process. It's not, "Well, I'm beginning the way of Divine Communion today, so I will submit absolutely." It is a form of approach, it's not a form of success. And clearly there is a maturity that will be demonstrated. More and more responsibility for the conditions of life will be in evidence in your case. That's*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

why you do sadhana, to mature in the realization of God. [9]

So the principle of sadhana is the love-relationship between the Guru and his devotee, and from the moment the Guru initiates it, it is already fulfilled in Truth. The Guru himself is always already finished in God. He is perfectly coincident with the Law of sacrifice. He weeps for his devotee, provokes his devotee. He will do anything to serve the realization of God in his devotee, but it is all mad play from his point of view, because there is only God. The devotee, for his part, enjoys no such sublime knowledge—at least not consciously—but he is continually being turned to love and service to the Guru. Sadhana begins when the devotee has lost sympathy with his own destiny, when he is no longer completely entranced by the glitter of his own image, when he has begun to sacrifice in love everything he considers his own. Only then does he approach the Guru with gratitude and devotion.

FUNCTIONAL LIFE AS STUDY

As you begin to take on the disciplines of the way of Divine Communion, you will see things about yourself. You are not asked to focus specifically on the process of self-observation. That is not the activity that you must be intentionally responsible for as a devotee. But it will occur naturally. You will see that your life does not amount to service, that you do not by tendency live in relationship to Bubba, that you are simply full of self-obsession, negativity, inertia, and so forth. And that is fine. You are *supposed* to see all these things. People tend to become guilty or discouraged about sadhana when they begin to see their own meanness, as if they were finding out for the first time that they are not angels after all! The point is not what you see, but what you do about it. In the way of Divine Communion your discipline, to whatever degree you are capable, is to yield your revealed tendencies and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

qualities to the Guru. No matter what arises, the way is to surrender all karmic conditions to the Guru and to receive his Presence in your life, to act on the basis of Satsang itself, rather than your own impulses.

> *To whatever degree you fail or find yourself unable to fulfill this discipline at any time, simply observe yourself, be easy, be full of enjoyment, make your actions at least an indulgence that does not harm others, and continue to turn to God through me and in the form of my Presence with feeling, from the heart. The more you mature in my Company, the more you will fulfill this discipline. The more you fulfill it, the more you will see of your turning from the Divine Condition. And the more you see of this turning away, the more responsible you will become for your turning to God through me.* [10]

So ultimately you will see and become responsible for everything in you that amounts to turning from Guru and God. For this reason Bubba emphasizes that *everything you do is a form of study.* When you are living this process of yielding and reception in life, even tangible, practical disciplines become media for your study. You very naturally see this turning away, and to the degree you are able, you should adjust your action to appropriate forms of behavior.

Although the life conditions we are about to describe seem to be fixed and universal, each individual must learn how to apply them with greater and greater intelligence to his personal life. For example, you have to experiment within the confines of the described diet in order to learn what quantities and kinds of foods are best for you. You should apply that same intelligence to all the other conditions and discover their appropriate and most life-supporting forms in your own case. These are not the Ten Commandments, you know! So the whole prospect of living these conditions must be approached with humor and energy, as a form of study.

To assist you in realizing these conditions more fully and responsibly as service to the Guru, and to help

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

you further realize the condition of study itself, you are asked to record your observations frequently in a personal diary and to complete a life report regularly. Your diary is to be simply a private record of observations of how this graceful process is working out in your own life. It is a way of becoming consciously responsible for what has been revealed to you, and it can provide an opportunity to express your enjoyment of this Divine Communion. By using the diary intelligently, over time you will be able to see clearly the Grace that this Communion represents over against your born tendencies.

Don't write excessively—but don't just skim the surface with superficial, brief, and infrequent notes, either. A few paragraphs every day or two should suffice. The diary is simply a way to express your relationship to the Guru in words.

The life report is a summary of your observations over time. Reviewing your diary will help you write it. Life reports can thus serve to bring clarity to your relationship to Bubba and your appreciation of the quality of your sadhana. Unlike the diary, the reports are given to others in the Community who review your sadhana. That does not mean they should be treated like confessionals! There is no praise, no blame in this way of life. If something is troubling you or you are finding difficulty living one or several of the conditions, feel free to report that simply and with humor. There is no curse. At the same time, feel free to sing ecstatically in your reports of your relationship to the Guru and the happiness you enjoy in his Company. *That* is what must be discovered and developed in sadhana, not how to become a perfectly disciplined being.

The forms to follow in writing these reports and specific instructions for their use are made available through the Correspondence Department of The Dawn Horse Communion.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTIONAL SINGING

Devotional singing is an important part of the daily life of The Dawn Horse Communion. In study groups, at meals, during occasions of formal Prasad, and at other times specifically set aside, Ashram members enjoy singing songs in praise of the Guru and God. It is an outward way of establishing conscious relationship to God through Guru, of projecting your life-force and feeling in song. This real devotional singing must be done with energy and real force. It releases us from our ritual patterns of self-conscious life and projects us through our emotions, our life-force, our breath, and our mind to Communion with God—all very naturally. It is not like a Sunday school service where people sing the songs because that is what they are supposed to do. Such an approach is just mechanical. There must be real expression of the living of this Divine Communion. That is why people feel awkward doing it—particularly the more heady types. They get self-conscious and think, "Well, it's not necessary, I already feel the devotion," and so forth. It is obviously difficult for them to communicate outwardly a kind of irrational loving energy. But it is useful. Devotional singing from the heart undoes the conceptual mind, and through it one becomes open to and participates in the ecstatic relationship that is always communicated in Satsang.

STUDY

Study and simple listening to teachings about God and Divinely realized individuals is a primary practical discipline of this way of Divine Communion. It is not to be approached in anything like the usual formal, mentalized, academic approach to study, by which you would take care to comprehend the major points of Bubba's Teaching and commit to memory a few salient facts about his life. If this kind of study were

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

asked of you, you would need to read only one book perhaps, and then you might read it only once.

No, the study you are asked to undertake is the continual, daily remembrance of your relationship to the Divine. If you are approaching it properly, it will become for you more of a refreshment, a delight, a *feast*, than any kind of arbitrary discipline or task. Each day, with energy and interest and for as long as possible, you should consider Bubba's Teaching on the way of Divine Communion as well as other God-literature. Such study will align you more and more completely in mind and heart to the intuitive happiness upon which Divine Communion rests.

The way of Divine Communion is a *radical*, as distinguished from a *traditional*, devotional path. The traditional paths of devotion begin from a conventional or limited point of view, rooted in the assumption that the Divine is presently absent or independent from life. Thus, their way of spiritual life invariably proceeds through some form of seeking for God. But our way of Divine Communion takes its stand in the living Presence of God in and through the Guru. It is not a way of search, but of yielding to the Divine that is already present in living terms. It is a way of celebration, fullness, *communion* already and right now. However, we must take our own liabilities into account in sadhana. And regardless of the extent of our involvement with any traditional path prior to coming to Bubba, we are all unconsciously full of the social, mystical, and archetypal influences which permeate the traditions of all cultures. Thus, studying the best of these traditions, specifically in the light of Bubba's Teaching, helps us distinguish our own way of life and sadhana from traditional devotional dharmas—while never preventing us from truly appreciating and delighting in them for what they are. Study is thus made a purifying activity that reestablishes the devotee in right relationship to the Guru.

Devotees in the way of Divine Communion participate in a regular study program, meeting together formally both in San Francisco and at Persimmon, as well as reading and reviewing Bubba's Teaching and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

great traditional spiritual literature on their own. The specific materials and recommendations for study may be obtained through writing to The Dawn Horse Communion.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST FOR NEW MEMBERS OF THE DAWN HORSE COMMUNION

The following is a list of works of classic and traditional spiritual literature which Bubba himself compiled for new devotees in the Community.

This reading list contains some of the most extraordinary books ever written. I recommend you study as many of them as possible. By "study" I do not mean you should read them merely for entertainment, but with intelligence and respect, and examine them from the point of view of real Communion with God. Such study is an appropriate expression of sadhana. It will help you become more sophisticated in your approach to spiritual life and can free your mind of sophomoric and arbitrary prejudices. Also, the more you know of traditional spirituality, the more you will be able to comprehend, critically and exactly, what is "radical" about Communion with God.

1. *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge,* by Arthur Osborne.
2. *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words,* by Arthur Osborne.
3. *Sri Ramana Gita, Dialogues of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.*
4. *The Heart of the Ribhu Gita,* edited by Bubba Free John.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

5. *Avadhut Gita*, by Mahatma Duttatreya, translated by Hari Prasad Shastri.
6. *The Song of the Self Supreme* (*Astavakra Gita*), translated by Radhakamal Mukerjee.
7. *The Sutra of Hui Neng*, in *The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Hui Neng*, translated by A. F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam.
8. *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po on the Transmission of Mind*, translated by John Blofeld.
9. *Bhagawan Nityananda*, by Swami Muktananda.
10. *Sai Baba, the Saint of Shirdi*, by Mani Sahukar.
11. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda. (You should read this book to familiarize yourself with Sri Ramakrishna's writings, but it is not necessary to read it in its entirety. It is available in both unabridged and abridged versions, and we recommend the abridged version as adequate for the study of the work of this 19th century saint.)
12. *The Bhagavadgita*, translated by Radhakrishnan.*
13. *Raja Yoga*, a translation of Patanjali's Yoga-System with a commentary, by Swami Vivekananda.*
14. *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence.
15. *Gopis' Love for Sri Krishna*, by Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar.
16. *Gita Sandesh*, by Swami Ramdas.
17. *God Experience*, by Swami Ramdas.
18. *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, translated by Tyagisananda.
19. *New Testament*, any good translation (perhaps *The Jerusalem Bible*, or *Amplified New Testament*).

*The text of this book is what is important, and it should be read in its entirety. However, it is not necessary to read the complete commentary, only those sections that may illumine your study of the text itself.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

STUDY GROUPS

Devotees in the Community meet each week in study groups to share experiences of what they have come to know about Communion with the Guru. Often marked with singing and ecstatic praise of God in personal, almost "testimonial" terms, they are a devotional occasion. Study groups are not "encounter" groups where everyone deals with each other to resolve some dilemma. The groups come together in the happiness of this relationship to Grace in Satsang and serve in each other its fuller realization.

WORK

The discipline of maintaining a productive work life is another practical form of devoting your life to Bubba as Guru. The ordinary affairs of human activity are the arena in which the devotional relationship and love for him in God are initiated and realized. Sadhana cannot begin in the clouds! Working requires you to bring your energy and presence into life in this world, hour by hour and day by day. It engages your hands, your eyes, your speech, and your guts in the active remembrance of the Guru and the yielding of your existence to him. When you make your work a way of living with Bubba in Satsang, you become grounded in him in the most human, vital, tangible ways.

Bubba spoke of the new devotee's relationship to work in *The Method of the Siddhas:*

> *Either he must work for his own support, and in most cases that is necessary, because most people don't have the money to live without work, or he must do so simply because it is appropriate to work. Work is a peculiarly human activity. It is the means for transcending*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the limitations of "lower," elemental conditions. Thus, it is not appropriate for people who come to live in Satsang to remain irresponsible for their own survival, or irresponsible for creative, supportive action in the human way.[11]

You are expected to be occupied every day in some form of work. For most, this indicates a full time job—so if you do not already have one, you should find suitable employment immediately. There are some devotees, however, who may have other work than a job, such as a student engaged in full time study or a parent who manages a home and children.

As you mature in your sadhana, you will see that the condition of work implies more than simply submitting to the discipline of having a job. If you look for the simplest, least engaging form of work that you can find, you are missing the point of this condition as a form of your relationship to Bubba. Your job should require great energy and represent your optimal capacity for real functioning. It should not merely reflect arbitrary or illusory preferences. It may be difficult at first to find such a position. In that case, take whatever work you can find for the time being, but you should continue to find well-paying employment which allows you to develop your skills and your capacities for human responsibility.

Bubba has often pointed out that the Community is neither a work camp nor a resort, but an *Ashram*, a Spiritual Community. That also should be kept in mind as you look for a job and as you become involved in your work. Your work should demand a lot of you, but it should leave you free to participate fully in the life of the Community. You will find that your life in sadhana will be fullest if you are free on week nights and weekends to be with the Community. It is best to find a job that allows you to spend time regularly and often in the Guru's company and the company of others living this Divine Communion.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

HOUSEHOLD

The process of Divine Communion amounts simply and entirely to yielding your life to the Siddha-Guru and receiving his Grace. But you cannot do it straight, you cannot do it intensely, and you cannot do it happily on your own.

In other words, the process is best tested, served, and quickened in you by a full life within the Guru's Community of devotees. By tendency each of us is always finding ways to cop out of sadhana, to rationalize our turning away, to ignore the Guru, to forget God. This is what we are doing all the time, not just in dramatic moments of life but, perhaps even more often, in the mediocre and simple instances of ordinary life.

That is why members of the Community generally live together in households of eight or more people. Aside from being an enjoyable and mutually beneficial environment, in which the Guru's Presence is alive in everyone, the household situation creates a mutual dependence in which the theatre of the sadhana of relationship—which is what Divine Communion is, after all—can be played out in most useful terms. Bubba urges everyone to move into such a Community household in order to share life, love, work, and effort with one another, to live this Divine Communion in every action, and not to seek some illusory "spiritual" life that excludes the world in principle and in fact. Living in such a household is simply a way of allowing your home environment to become permeated with the Guru's demand for surrender and the Guru's radiant Presence.

If you live alone now, you should at least find a roommate with whom you can share intimacy and mutual dependence. If you live in an area where there are correspondents or in San Francisco, you should consider joining others in a living situation in which you can share this process as soon as you become grounded in it.

If you share a household with someone who is not a devotee of Bubba Free John, you may encounter

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

difficulties, which, while no greater in fact than those encountered by any other devotee, may seem to be more problematic, because they cannot be approached under the condition of mutual sadhana. It is very possible for someone whose mate is not a participant in this path to do the sadhana of the way of Divine Communion, but it may be difficult. Nevertheless, if you do this sadhana to the best of your capacity as Bubba has described it, directing your energy to the loving service of those around you, then this path will truly serve you and the members of your household. But you must be very intelligent in maximizing your contact in other situations with Bubba and the Community.

The remembrance and service of the Guru is furthered in your household, in your office, wherever your surroundings may be, by the keeping of a clean, orderly, healthful, and pleasurable environment for yourself and your companions. As you become more of a devotee of Bubba, your house will become his house, your life his life. The pleasures of keeping it as a place of God will become more and more obvious, and should become a real expression of the gratitude this Grace will naturally awaken in you. In very real terms Bubba lives with all of those who live with him, and you will over time want to keep your environment in such a way that he would enjoy visiting you wherever you are.

It is a certainty in me that, fundamentally, a person must do this sadhana in relationship with other people. And to assume the condition of a household with others with whom you have mutual dependencies is the proper form in which to do this sadhana. The traditional isolated man, making it on his own, surviving against odds, is typical of our culture. But the household situation of many individuals, not just a husband and wife, is the most appropriate situation for doing this sadhana.

I do not recommend that people move into a household situation until they have studied the work to the point of testing themselves and knowing that they can do this sadhana, and also knowing what this

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

sadhana is. When a person enters into your household, your survival as a household partially depends on his participation. If he just found out about this work yesterday, he may want to leave next week, because he did not quite understand what this sadhana was going to involve. Somebody might hear that you are a bunch of good guys and then be welcomed into your household immediately. That is entirely your business. You can manage your household in any way you like. But, in general, I think you ought to recommend to people that they study the work privately until you are satisfied that they can stably be present in your house and contribute to it.

DEVOTEE: Developing households with one another so that our livelihood is interdependent is different from mere communal life, which does not ever become intense. Our sadhana itself almost becomes interdependent, like we never imagined it before.

BUBBA: Right. Household situations are not just communes. If they were, I wouldn't care in the least about your living that way.

The usual man conceives himself in isolation and dramatizes his life in those terms. What is the image of the good life in this country? Having your own castle, your own husband or wife, your own kids, your own everything. Everybody having his "own" same thing. *His own car, his own house, his own T V set. Every guy conceives himself as that archetype repeated again. It is Narcissus.*

As a result, we do not make use of what we have gained after hundreds of thousands of years of struggling at the vital level, which is the possibility of a truly human culture, a culture in which we do not have to live on an emergency basis relative to the life-process anymore. We can pre-solve the life situation, essentially. There will always be things that arise, and we will have to deal with them, but essentially we can pre-solve the life-condition. We do not have to be operating on an emergency basis, we do not have to be searching for private survival in the idiotic struggling way that

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

people are always doing in this world at the present time. We can share the life-force, the responsibility of life, and we can survive without adventure. By doing that we can make our energy available for the perfect life, the great activity, the creative process. We do not have to be meandering in this salt of the earth bullshit all the time.

It becomes possible, by adapting to one another as a condition, to see the undoing of vital shock as the principle of life. We can even out the vital, so that we do not have to resort any longer to the principles of peculiarity and solidity and mere vitality. That affair can only be done when we relinquish intelligently, not through motivation but through understanding, the urge toward private realization in the simple terms that life itself represents. We can assume a mutually dependent condition as soon as we see that there is something intelligent about doing that.*

You run into a lot of difficulties, of course, because your entire life (not just externally) below the conscious mind is devoted to this private destiny, this affair of Narcissus. And it is just filled with all kinds of equipment and strategies devoted to that end. So as soon as you assume the discipline of relationship as your condition of life, you are going to see manifested in you all of these other urges and principles and strategies and demands. You will have the option every hour of the day to buy out for some level of craziness. That is exactly what this sadhana is all about: First there is the assumption of a real condition (especially the perfect, ultimate, and prior condition of Satsang) as a discipline based on understanding, followed by the observation in your own case, under those circumstances, of this theatre of Narcissus. Then there is the living a life of service (especially in the company of others who serve, who also serve you) on the basis of that observation, to

*Bubba uses the terms "peculiar," "solid," and "vital" to describe the three characteristic strategies we adopt in reaction to vital shock. These strategies or ways of playing on life when it is conceived as dilemma are discussed in this book in the section entitled "Vitals, Peculiars, and Solids," page 223.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the point where you can assume perfect and humorous responsibility in the form of real sacrifice relative to your own dramatization.[12]

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE ASHRAM

The Ashram is not an "organization" from which irresponsible individuals may rightly buy or gain various services. The Ashram is a community in which each member is a responsible participant, in constant communion with the Guru and all his devotees. All who take on the conditions of this sadhana and become regular members of the Ashram of Bubba Free John are responsible for their personal sadhana and for the general obligation to make his Teaching available in the world.

All members pledge a minimal regular tithe (ten percent of income before taxes), which is submitted weekly or monthly. Beyond this tithe, each one contributes a larger share of his income based on his personal and household conditions. This greater share is also his responsibility, but the amount is determined by consultation and agreement with other members of the Community. The same is true of more occasional special contributions or gifts.

Communion devotees in the mature stages of practice are, in general, expected, as a condition of sadhana, to become regular members of the Ashram Community. Every aspect of life then, including one's financial position in the world, must be integrated with the Ashram Community and released from the usual principle of individual and private survival against odds. Therefore, each one is expected to yield the greater portion of his personal income and property to the condition of community. This demand is an offense to the program of self-survival locked into the vital, and anyone with substantial income, fortune, or property will find it extremely difficult to fulfill this demand, unless he is clearly committed to this Satsang and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

understands its principles of sadhana. In general, no member of the Community retains more than 25% of his assets, income, or property for free personal use. His financial responsibility thus represents a real and material commitment to the Ashram Community and to the support of Bubba's Teaching work in the world.

The income from regular contributions and special gifts goes to further the educational work of the Ashram and to provide both permanent endowment and necessary facilities for Persimmon, the principal location of the revelation of Bubba's Teaching, so that his work may go on here undisturbed by any temporary circumstances. Persimmon is intended for the regular and full use of all members of the Ashram Community.

DIET AND HEALTH

Adapting one's life to Communion with Bubba Free John can be assisted practically and regularly through the maintenance of a healthful and "harmless" diet. Eventually we come to know that our bodily existence and vitality have no use in themselves but to serve God and to be vehicles of his Grace. Our lives become service to the Lord, and bodily health is not viewed as something to be sought or indulged, but is simply enjoyed as a vehicle for living our life in God.

Practically, we begin with an essentially lacto-vegetarian diet that involves, to whatever degree possible, non-killing of higher creatures who possess the sense of independent existence. As we mature in our fulfillment of this discipline, we take responsibility for the harmonization of bodily or vital functions through the intelligent management of the whole affair of diet, health practices, breath, and exercise. Much has been written in these areas—health involves a search for so many people, as if organic apples or juice fasting were a means to the realization of Truth! That is a lot of nonsense, and it has nothing to do with the appropriate management of these factors in our sadhana. It is simply

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

that our vital lives are most enjoyable and useful when their condition is harmonious, free of disease or at least service to disease, and lived consciously in Divine Communion without our having chronically to put attention on them.

Bubba has outlined for the Community a system of diet and health practice, including exercise, which serves the adaptation to the laws of manifest existence. This system covers every area of diet and health and represents a real alternative to the vital craziness and obsession we find everywhere in our so-called "culture." However, you are not expected to take on all these recommended practices at once. To the best of your capacity you should engage these principles and only over time realize them naturally as real service. You are expected to live them only to the degree you are able, without getting upset or fanatical about them.

Not any *less* than that degree, however! Don't allow yourself to start approaching the Guru in a pattern of random or regular self-indulgence. When he spoke in his first letter on the way of Divine Communion about how to approach these practical disciplines, Bubba said, "Be easy." He did not mean by that, "Take it easy." So you should do your practical sadhana with humor, and also with great intensity, with as much energy as you can muster.

The most complete description of the diet and health recommendations are found in the Ashram's book, *The Eating Gorilla Comes in Peace*. You should read this book soon, applying its practices to your own life as fully as possible.

The diet and health regimen Bubba describes is not a prescription for eternal life or eternal youth, or for attaining God-Realization. It is merely appropriate. It is designed to bring the body into a state of maximum health, based on one's karmic condition in general, and to maintain and improve that health based on the process of sadhana, or life assumed in the Conscious Principle that is always senior and prior to karma (destiny based on tendency, or established motion). People tend to become fanatics about food, and to become obsessed with what they put into their mouths,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

so that they use food as part of their spiritual quest. This tendency must be understood. Therefore, the diet is designed to define what is appropriate to eat, so that you can eat it and then forget it, and not use food as a part of your search.

The basic diet is lacto-vegetarian, which means we use some milk products, but do not eat meat, fish, poultry, or, generally, eggs. We avoid killed food, not because it is "sinful" to eat it, but simply because it is not necessary or, in general, healthful to eat flesh food. The diet is a low protein/high natural carbohydrate diet with three basic food groups:

1. Grains, nuts and seeds (the backbone of this diet)
2. Vegetables
3. Fruits

Food should be eaten in as natural a state as possible, and raw food should comprise much of the diet. Refined foods, i.e. sugar, white flour, and so forth, are prohibited, because these toxify and enervate the psycho-physical being. And alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, and other toxic stimulants, as well as drugs, are also prohibited.

The diet is followed by everyone in The Dawn Horse Communion, except at special celebration times, which are not decided upon by individuals under private circumstances, but which are openly declared for all in common. The diet is life-supporting, and, beyond that, it is lawful. It turns you away from self-indulgence and exploitation to the intelligent, sacrificial practice of life.

The health practices of The Dawn Horse Communion, as outlined in *The Eating Gorilla Comes In Peace*, simply represent an appropriate approach to health. They are not a response to the problematic mind, the life in dilemma, nor do they serve the search for "cures." They are a way of neither exploiting nor denying the vital laws of psycho-physical life.

People want to take on spiritual life as a conscious, mystical, and philosophical affair, and of course that's what it's all about. But there are karmas below consciousness in the psycho-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

> *physical entity that have to be accounted for, and you have to be dealing with them consciously. Otherwise they filter through in the form of symptoms and problematic assumptions at the conscious level, which you tend to think have a psychological or spiritual basis and goal, when actually what you are responding to is perhaps organic and closest to the physical itself.*[13]

In order to understand and account for your particular liabilities, you will need to sharpen your observations of your physical and mental states. In *The Eating Gorilla Comes In Peace*, the section on histories and physical exams gives examples of the kinds of questions that may help you become aware of your unique psycho-physical patterns. As soon as you take on the practical disciplines, you should begin making notes of how the various disciplines affect you. After about two months, when your body has had a chance to purify itself and stabilize under these conditions, you may wish to have a complete physical exam. Prepare a detailed personal history, using the guidelines provided in the book, and select a doctor who will take the time fully to discuss with you all that he is discovering. Ask your doctor as many questions as you wish. This process of self-observation and professional examination should help you avoid the problematic assumptions Bubba cautions us about.

Specific questions about health matters may be directed to Dr. Bill Gray, The Dawn Horse Communion, Star Route 2, Middletown, California 95461.

LUNCH-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Toxicity and enervation are the primary factors in all the kinds of physical and nervous disease. An irresponsible and self-indulgent life is one which exploits and in one way or another fails to control and realize the principal functions of the relational life-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

process. Thus, the functions of money (or relational life-force at the common or social level), food, and sex are the instruments of disease and failure in the usual man. The usual man is moved by tendencies, motion without intelligence or real consciousness, because the principles of his life are desire, thought, and ego or separate self sense. And the theatre of his suffering is composed of his peculiar functional drama of money, food, and sex.

The various life-conditions communicated by Bubba to those who live in Satsang with him are all forms of the appropriate functional management of life in relation to its principal functions: money, food, and sex. The natural, humorous, and responsible fulfillment of these conditions is necessary for all who would live in the condition of Satsang. And those who manage their lives in these appropriate ways will also enjoy a life free of toxicity and enervation caused by misuse of primary functions.

However, Bubba has continually reminded us that the appropriate management of the life-function is simply that. It is appropriate. And thus, such a way of life is free from moment to moment of spurious and dramatic functional programs that are the unconscious armor of Narcissus. The Guru wants his devotee to be free of functional strategies, the whole pattern of a self-indulgent and irresponsible life, that are the life-manifestations of his compulsive turning or contraction hour to hour. Secondarily, the fulfillment of the Guru's conditions also manifests as relief from toxicity and enervation, insofar as these are caused or intensified by misuse of life-functions. However, in communicating these appropriate conditions to the Ashram, Bubba has no intention to bind us to alternative goals, such as those that arise in the traditional spiritual search. He has no intention to bind us to goals of artificial celibacy, immortality or physical perfection, or in any of the social and economic goals of those who strive in the usual world. Nor does he intend for us to become trapped in the lesser and even more obnoxious states, wherein we feel righteous and pure, somehow relieved of a superficial sense of guilt by virtue of the fulfillment

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

of disciplines. Bubba's conditions are simply appropriate, and they serve the primary condition of Satsang by allowing us to witness the tendencies, the searches, and the felt dilemma of our own lives in functional terms. All that we gain in the form of righteousness is an obstacle, and all that we gain in the form of positive changes of state is to be understood.

Even so, whenever individuals adapt to any formal use of the life functions, the limiting force of the strategy of Narcissus finds a way to manipulate them. Purity and impurity are forms of functional status in life. They are not themselves identical to or identifiable as qualities of either Truth or illusion. Status of any kind is a condition to be understood. Satsang is the prior condition of all men. And it is consciously assumed and lived in the relationship between the devotee and the Siddha-Guru. But even such a way of life requires the force of understanding or real intelligence in the devotee. Otherwise it is only another condition in ignorance, and a ground for childish motivations. Just so, the secondary or functional conditions of money, food, and sex must also be realized in understanding.

Bubba expects all who turn to him to realize their functional lives in the spirit of freedom and responsibility. Only in a conscious life of understanding can both of these qualities, responsibility and freedom, be realized. The seeker is always caught in the dilemma of these two qualities. It is the common experience of those who adopt a pattern of life that also promotes health, purity, and well-being that they tend to acquire the quality of righteousness as well as a loss of freedom and humor in society with the greater world. The fulfillment of the appropriate and secondary conditions in relation to money, food, and sex tends, after the period when resistance is largely overcome, to become the ground for a cult of discipline.

Bubba has often spoken of this "lunch-righteousness," which comes over devotees after they have managed to overcome their initial resistance to the discipline of their functions. The cult of lunch-righteousness always tends to appear in the Ashram,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

just as also does the cult of self-indulgence. For this reason Bubba has often in the past appeared to act in paradoxical ways among his devotees. On one occasion he took a bunch of righteous vegetarian devotees on a fishing trip and then served up the catch at a feast! At times he would shock those present by enjoying a cigarette or a cup of coffee! He has been known to take a little wine, to dance, and to laugh aloud! All such actions of his own were determined to counter this "lunch-righteousness" in his devotees.

EXERCISE

Bubba requires that all devotees do a reasonable amount of deliberate and conscious exercise each day. *Conscious Exercise and the Transcendental Sun* describes the basic approach to exercise as well as the specific exercise program which Bubba recommends.

As the title of the book implies, the purpose of exercise, as Bubba defines it, is more than the mere strengthening of muscles or loss of weight, although these and other changes may occur as side benefits. Conscious exercise is "a process which vitalizes and intensifies one's life." Ideally, exercise is a way of participating in or cooperating with the transference of energy from the Uncreated Light above the world into the Vital realm of manifest existence.

Bubba recommends two short periods of exercise each day, 7-10 minutes of calisthenics in the morning and 7-10 minutes of yoga in the afternoon or evening. The correct way to do these exercises is described and illustrated in *Conscious Exercise and the Transcendental Sun*.

As with all conditions of this work, exercise is merely appropriate. These exercises are designed to help keep your body healthy, not to make you a super-yogi, nor to alter your state of consciousness in some extraordinary way, as if changes of state somehow led to Truth. With this approach to exercise in mind, you

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

should exercise regularly, with intensity and concentration.

SEX

As a devotee of Bubba Free John, you are asked to manage sexuality in an appropriate manner, one that is functionally true. You should simply surrender all promiscuity, including masturbation and indulgence of the "sex-game" approach to life. You should either confine yourself sexually to a single partner in a responsible household setting, or else engage in the natural and general play of relational life, without actual sex contact, until such a relationship is created. The recommended observation of this natural discipline may be relaxed on occasions of general celebration in the Ashram, but even on such occasions, as at all other times, sexuality, like all other functions, should be realized in relationship, and relationship always implies responsibility and genuine intimacy. So you should maintain this discipline as closely as possible, and live it in the happy spirit of your life with the Guru. As that devotional life matures, and the quality of your life with friends and other devotees becomes more clearly a form of real intimacy, you will find that you are much less willing or even interested to engage in sexuality under any circumstances other than profound intimacy and genuine love-desire.

The following essay on sexuality was written by Bubba especially for new devotees in the Community.

The confinement of sexuality to conscious play in relationship (rather than its spurious indulgence or its suppression, which, in both cases, is a private, non-relational, exclusive exercise) creates a condition under which you may observe and surrender your tendencies relative to the force of sexuality, even to the force of life itself.

Orgasm is the principle when seeking is pursued in

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the form of sexuality. Because the ordinary man lives with a sense of opposition or separation, interpreting life not as enjoyment but as obsessive desire, he seeks release. He looks for a momentary release through the contemplation of a distraction, a fascination powerful enough to absorb him. When his search is conducted through the functional path of sexuality, release is sought through orgasm via fascination with sexual objects, which he (or she) defines and feels in his own body or that of another. Physically, he distracts himself in the whole "sex-game-promiscuity" number. He empties and breaks the circle of energy, by using orgasm to create the status of relief or emptiness, emptied of the motivating sense of desire. Sex for the usual man is not founded in enjoyment but desire. Thus, it attains momentary emptiness, or release from desire (or release from the energy sufficient to feel desire, which is pressure created by contraction), rather than constant or prolonged enjoyment, whose characteristic is fullness.*

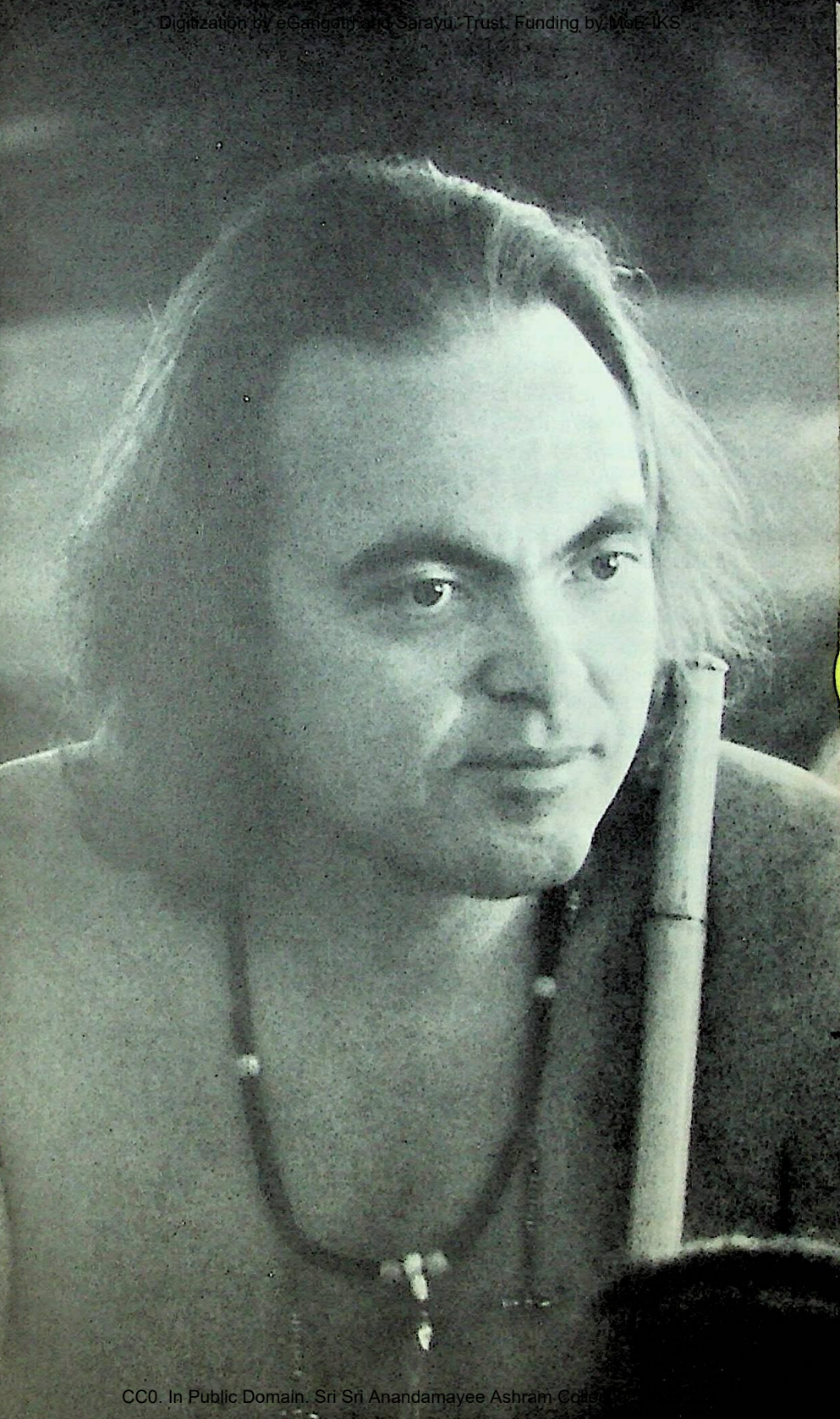
Dilemma is the sense of obstructed enjoyment or attenuated happiness. Our reaction to felt dilemma is desire, the search. And the search is always toward the attainment of the goal of release from desire itself in a restored sense of enjoyment. But the enjoyment attained or acquired by seeking is gotten by emptying, suppressing, or transcending the life-functions, the mechanism of desire. Therefore, it is enjoyment of a negative or exclusive kind, in which Truth is not realized as Consciousness but identified with some change of state.

Celibacy is another way to dramatize this whole problem of sexuality approached from the point of view of dilemma. Sexuality represents a problem to most individuals. Therefore, it is ultimately not enjoyable, not fun, not intimate and relational, but private and separative, so that celibacy seems to represent an

*Bubba distinquishes between conventional desire, which is simply an obsessive tendency founded in memory, vital shock, and ego, and true or real desire, which is a spontaneous and yogic manifestation of the whole being, founded in the Divine Enjoyment.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

alternative to both sexuality and self-indulgence. It is generally assumed as a way of getting free of sexuality, and it is experienced as a complex and even neurotic self-confinement, resulting in separation. No one wants *to be celibate. It is natural to be sexual. But the failure of sexual life and life itself makes celibacy seem like a real alternative.*

In addition to celibacy and self-indulgence, there are all sorts of sophisticated structures of seeking built around the principle of sexuality. There are all sorts of schemes for psychiatric and transcendent realization via sexuality by means of suppression, manipulation, or sublimation of the sex-force. But for one who is living in Satsang, which is prior Enjoyment, life has become conscious enjoyment, and there is no exclusive or fixed attention on either sexuality or orgasm as remedy. In such a case, sexuality evens out, and naturally falls into a condition which is enjoyable, natural, and simple, without self-consciousness. Ultimately, in the maturing devotee, sexuality becomes a "yoga," a form of conscious conductivity, a Divine Event. All of this arises naturally, spontaneously, when attention is drawn into the condition of relationship itself and is not exclusively fixated on sexuality or the phenomena of release.

For those in the Ashram, seeking via sexuality is as inappropriate as all other forms of the search. A true sexual relationship or relational realization of sexuality will develop over a period of time in its natural, appropriate form if one is otherwise founded in the true Principle of sadhana which is Satsang.

Masturbation is a solitary activity. It is a representation in graphic form of the avoidance of relationship through sexuality, and should not be indulged but understood as an urge. The compulsive desire comes from confinement to vital contraction, or vital shock, the living of obstruction. If there is no contraction, no avoidance, masturbation is not felt to be a need. Then the conductivity of life is constant, and the play of sexuality is generated entirely and only as a play in specific relationship with another. If as a devotee this implies no orgasms for a year or more,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

because no partner has appeared, then merely understand and surrender the power of this function.

No one in the Ashram should indulge the preference for no-sex and the strategy of celibacy. That is not necessary for spiritual life. It is only a mechanical or functional attainment at best and has no necessary relationship to Truth. The life-process is a structure of polarization in an order descending and ascending. Each organism must master its polarization to what is functionally below it, establish and intensify its polarization to what is functionally above it, and realize or maintain its polarization with what is functionally at its own level. Thus, we must remain sexual beings in relationship, while at the same time we enjoy true functional relationship with what is apparently above and below. This is the law of function. If we abandon it, we at least become obsolete in the areas wherein we abandon it. But whether we abandon or realize ourselves in the polarized (positive-negative, male-female, descending-ascending, active-passive, etc.) play of functions has nothing whatever to do with Truth. Truth is not above, below, within, or without. It is of a radical nature, the process of Consciousness itself.

Sexual beings are polarized to their opposites. Thus, we have the play of male and female in the form of various personal and social roles. It is a creative play, and the roles need not become fixed, but the polarization must remain if life is to animate the human game. Therefore, in general, homosexuality must be understood either as an aberration, like masturbation, in which one turns on oneself as an object (even one's own pleasure as an object) and so avoids the complications of polarized behavior, or else as an attempt to dramatize the role usually enjoyed by one's natural polar opposite. In the latter case one flees one's natural polar role because of some trauma or other that makes one's natural role too frightening or one's natural or polar opposite too threatening. One may be homosexual in order to avoid one's enactment of the role of male or female, or to dramatize the opposite role, or else to avoid sexual contact with the polar opposite while still experiencing sexual release through

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

use of the secondary possibilities offered by a partner of one's own sex.

Homosexuality, then, is essentially an aberrated activity generated because of traumas related to the fulfillment of natural and polarized sexual roles. It feeds on vital shock. There may be occasional rare cases in which an individual is not functionally polarized in the direction of the natural sexual role to which he or she seems bodily to be fitted. Such would be the case of one who is organically developed in such a way as to be inclined toward the fulfillment of the energy role of the apparently opposite sex. Others may be so strongly identified with the functional condition of a subtler and oppositely polarized state (in some dimension above, such as the etheric) that they tend to take on mannerisms and the qualities and urges of the opposite role on the gross physical level. Thus, there are rare cases of genuine homosexuality, in which the natural polarization of sexual play is engaged but by individuals of the same apparent sex, or of the opposite sex (but the roles played by each may be the apparent opposite of their visible gender).

Nevertheless, it is not suggested that homosexuals in the Ashram abandon their sexual life, since homosexuality does not represent any greater obstruction to a harmonious and functional life than the ordinary narcissistic sexuality of heterosexuals. But the same discipline is given to all. The homosexual must begin to surrender the urges and resistances represented by his or her sexuality in a relationship with a single partner, based upon the same conditions as are described for a heterosexual relationship.

In general, the urge to homosexuality should be simply understood, like masturbation, and the self-degrading or weakening fear at its core undone, so that the play of sexuality may be released into its natural form of polarity.

Our human realization requires passage through the discipline of psycho-physical polarization, and, therefore, it also requires sexual mastery in the form of sexual fulfillment. One who does sadhana under the conditions of his sexuality and essentially polarized

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

functional nature discovers that even sexuality is self-transcending. Union is equanimity (not stasis, emptiness, solidity, rigidity, or immobility, but resonance, harmony, and intensity). Such equanimity is the meaning of the traditional term "samadhi." The orgasm, like any other specific attainment, is at best temporary realization of fulfillment or equanimity (whereas, in general, it is usually only the experience of temporary stasis, emptiness, or non-desire). But one who is sensitive to his own process of existence sees that equanimity, or union, is his condition always and already. Equanimity is not the condition realized upon release or the fulfillment of a desire. Rather, it is the prior condition of all relationship. It is the quality of enjoyment or happiness itself.

Some exercise themselves sexually, according to the principle of desire (search in dilemma), in order to attain samadhi, or equanimity, or union. Therefore, they make the way of self-exploitation and orgasm appear to be a way to God (just as others make the way of non-self-exploitation and sexual sublimation or retention of sex-force appear to be a way to God). But it is clear in the case of real understanding that samadhi, equanimity, or union is the very and prior condition of all relationship. Therefore, samadhi, equanimity, or union is not attained. It is not grasped by manipulation of any functional energy or process, high or low. Rather, it is realized to be always, already, radically, and thus presently the case. Relationship itself is the union. Existence itself is enjoyment or conscious and unqualified happiness. Such is the knowledge of one who understands, and in this understanding he is free of dilemma, vital shock, seeking, the whole force of dramatized desire, and the distractions of every kind of goal, high or low.

As long as vital shock, dilemma, and the theatre of separate and separative self, mind, and desire remain as the motivating core of an individual's life, he is expected to do sadhana under conditions that serve the conscious process in his own case. Therefore, devotees in the Ashram are expected to maintain themselves sexually within the framework of an essentially conventional

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

and single heterosexual or, if need be, homosexual relationship. All other forms of sexual play would be, fundamentally, a dramatization in them, preventing self-observation, insight, and conscious understanding.

It is only in the perfect devotee that it has become clear that the realization of polarized life is not orgasm (release and stasis or emptiness) but enjoyment (unqualified relationship, equanimity, or unreasonable happiness). Therefore, the perfect devotee may play the polarized and even sexual game of human life with humor and in freedom. And he does this without manipulating sex itself, suppressing it in order to attain Truth (as release) or exploiting it in order to attain release (as Truth). What is either exploited or suppressed ceases to be a seat of consciousness, and so it reappears in other or renewed forms. Such is the karmic principle of rebirth. But what is known in Truth becomes itself Divine (non-karmic) and no longer binds. Such is the Principle of the human freedom of the man of understanding.

LOVE-DESIRE

Sexuality, in human beings and all others polarized into two sexes, is essentially and originally a *generative* function. Its function in this sense is reproductive, the simple and organic generation of new human lives. But human beings are capable of a higher, intelligent, and consciously intimate enjoyment of their sexuality that transcends and often bypasses entirely this merely organic generative function.

However, very few of us live our sexuality as a transcendent enjoyment. In fact, even when we are using it for the purpose of reproduction, almost *all* human beings *always* engage their sexuality in a *degenerative* manner, usually as a way of throwing off life-energy through the self-obsessed gratification of mere desire without love. Nearly all the influences alive in our society reinforce such degenerative sexuality. It is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

one of the principal vehicles of our mutual degradation and bondage to the lowest dimensions of our conscious existence.

But the true, natural, and full use of sexuality, whether or not reproduction is involved, does not degenerate but *regenerates* our humanity at every level. Bubba says in the following talk that this regenerative sexuality is the natural expression of both love and desire when they are full and unobstructed. It involves such a consuming turning to your intimate partner through all of the vehicles of body and life-force or emotion that the mind is overwhelmed, and there is none of the usual coolness, self-manipulation, or essentially pornographic thoughts and imagery. This intensely turned condition is "love-desire." It is regenerative because sexual activity in such a case does not empty you of life-energy, but fills you, and returns body, mind, and emotions to a naturally harmonious condition.

This may sound like a form of profound spiritual realization—and, in fact, to realize love-desire fully does depend on a realized life of Divine Communion. But Bubba does not expect his devotees to found their sexual activity in love-desire only when their spiritual lives have become full. He expects it from the beginning. Thus, no one in the Community is to engage in sexual relations at any time with any person unless he or she is already established in intense love-desire in that relationship. Under almost all circumstances, members of the Ashram enjoy sexual intercourse only with their partners in marriage—but Bubba insists that the convention of marriage not be used as an excuse for degenerative practices and habits. If either aspect, the profound force of love or the overwhelming movement of desire, is missing from your intimate relationship at any given moment, then, as Bubba says, you must "keep it in your pants!"

Thus engaged, sexuality becomes not only a fully human enjoyment but also, in time, a transcendent spiritual practice. In the disciple stage of the way of Understanding and the second and third stages of the way of Divine Communion, responsible members of the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Community are instructed in the esoteric relationship of sexuality to the spiritual process. As Bubba often points out, no genuine and full God-Realization is possible for human beings without a perfectly unobstructed relationship to sexuality.

(From a talk given by Bubba on February 15, 1976.)

There is a vast difference between eroticism, the conventional obsessiveness that some couples feel for one another, and the real process of love-desire which may serve a non-conventional understanding of sexuality. Love-desire is a play of every sexually-oriented couple, of every man-woman relationship, of every kind of sexual relationship. Love and desire are the implications of these unions.

Most conventional relationships are a play upon the failure of either love or desire. Many couples are very "horny" for one another, always wanting to make it with one another, basically because of the failure of love. The more love fails, the more erotic they become. They are really very cool toward one another, but also very horny at the same time. Then there are other couples in whom there is the failure of desire. In them there is a kind of conventional exploitation of the feeling of love. They are frigid, impotent, and sexless, but always holding hands and kissing and being very cozy with one another. Their obsession is the result of the failure of desire.

The true and useful form of mutual relationship that includes sexuality is one in which both love and desire are positively present. In that case there is not the usual erotic motivation to exploit sex with one another. It is undone through love. On the other hand, there is not the similarly conventional motivation to hold hands and be children with one another. That motivation is undone through the force of desire.

Where there is the full complement of love and desire in a relationship, there is not the seedy, erotic inclination to exploit one another all the time, nor is there the kind of distance where there is no love. Then, every occasion of intimacy that includes sexuality is creative, because there is no mind, no imagery. There

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

isn't the sense that you can succeed at it. When you are horny, you know you can succeed in sexual relations, because you are basically obsessed by the exclusive principle of desire.

Where there is both fullness of love and fullness of desire, you do not have the feeling that you are going to succeed at it. You do not even have the feeling that you can necessarily have the orgasm on the occasion of love-making. Orgasm becomes a possibility as the intimacy is played out in every particular occasion. And such an occasion is very new, then, and something that human beings are generally not familiar with. Human beings are generally familiar with the exclusive forms of loving or the exclusive forms of desiring, in which the complement is suppressed. The exclusivity is what creates the energy around desiring or eroticism or loving or just tacky, airy-fairy emotionalism. Where there is the fullness of love-desire, there is no face. There is real attention, real energy, real emotion, real fullness, without the usual content.

Where both elements of the living process of love-desire are not completely present, you become involved in a conventional orientation to one another, one of these two kinds that I have just described. Where both elements are present, there is a natural commitment to one another that is not a matter of discipline and decision and "I won't make love with anyone else, just with you" and all that sort of stuff. None of those decisions come into play. There is a natural orientation to one another, and therefore, there are occasions of sexual intimacy which create their own immediate destiny through the play of sex but which have no guarantees beforehand.

Where there is so much love, desire does not become erotic. Where there is so much desire, love does not become twinkie. Where both are active, where there is love-desire in a relationship, there is the motive of real play, and in that case you may begin to grasp the esoteric aspects of the Dharma relative to sexuality. But as long as you have only an exclusive desire relationship with your partner, or an exclusive love relationship, you will never grasp the Teaching relative to sexuality.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

You will continue to be a random, mediocre person, compromisable by the influence of every other human being who represents sexuality and emotion in some form to you.

Where there is love-desire, there is natural commitment, natural attention, fullness of presence with one another, not the usual horniness and obsessiveness and twinkiness of a conventional relationship. On the other hand, most relationships are very conventional, a play upon the suppression of either love or desire. You must see, in the case of your marriages, how you are consistently, strategically involved in the suppression of one or another element of the life union. You must ultimately become responsible to the point where love-desire is the form of your connection with your lover. Then you may understand something about the higher, esoteric nature of the sexual process, which I have described to some recently and which most of you will have some contact with eventually.

There is nothing more disturbing than a continuous sexual contact in which there is no love, in which there is just the conventional and verbal acknowledgment of loving. But you know when you are loved by someone. When the force of love and desire is presented to you through someone, you are profoundly relieved of your conventional mind. And if you truly respond to it through both love and desire in yourself, that response is the grounds for a real marriage.

Most marriages, though, are just based on either eroticism or twinkie emotionalism. They are agreements, cults, that support the suppression of one or another of these two elements of love and desire. If your marriage is of that kind, and I am certain that all your marriages are of that kind to some degree, then you must understand that play and why you got married—in other words, what the cult is between you. And you must ultimately come to the point where the fullness of love-desire is the form of your play with one another. If it cannot be, then either you will naturally divorce one another eventually, or you will just submit to that limitation and not fully realize yourself in sexual terms.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: Bubba, I have noticed that when there is real love-desire, that in itself is the fulfillment. There is no movement towards any satisfaction because love-desire is the total fulfillment at that moment.

BUBBA: The sexual play is not satisfying except to the erotic mind. Where there is love-desire, nothing changes through the vehicle of sexual play. Where there is love-desire between two people, the orgasm does not produce anything significant. The exercise with one another does not change anything. The condition of their relationship is their enjoyment, and it is constant. The ritual of sexuality does not change it at all. Therefore, only such people, who are free of the conventional ritual of sexuality that exhausts the life-force, may begin to understand higher responsibility relative to the sexual process.

So where there is genuine love-desire between two people, they are very full, very happy, not always agitated by one another, not always getting horny and exclusive. The conventional motive to sexuality is completely eliminated where there is love with desire. But you are all used to desire without love. You have all seen the magazines and the movies and been turned on. You know what desire is without love, and it is the principle of your sexuality. That is why you get turned on, that is why you respond to eroticisms. And that is why you require your marriages to be erotic, because you depend on that loveless connection through which you may have the orgasm and return to this sense of emptiness. But where you love one another as well as desire one another, the connection is constant. It is always a play.

Where there is the natural relationship of love-desire, there is also sex play, not only the actual, typical sexual play that you all know about. But the life drama between two people is *all* sexual play. It is *all* full of energy. It *all* brings energy into being. Where there is love-desire between two people, it continually awakens the life-force in them and makes them very full. And occasionally, at random, they engage in actual sexual relations, but not obsessively.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

But you are all obsessed with sex. It is all pornographic. Pornography is desire without love. It is the specimen of movement without opening. And you are all involved in this eroticism. You are obsessed with no-love. The significance of it is not the obsession with desire and sexuality itself, but the obsession with no-love that promotes such an involvement. As long as love is not the principle of your presence in the world, you are completely limited to the force of desiring, not only of sexual desiring, but of all desiring. All your life is desiring, without love. It excludes love. It is based on no-love. It depends on no-love. And therefore everything you are doing reinforces no-love. But where there is love, then the pattern of desiring in the world becomes benign and intelligent, no longer a matter of suffering. Then at least there is the possibility of the conscious process, the sacrificial process, of Divine Realization.

As long as you are simply obsessed with desire and therefore with no-love, there is no realization, there is no sadhana. And there is great pain in a life obsessed with desire and its fulfillment without love. Where there is love there is no obsession. All obsessions fall where there is love. And there is no horniness in love. There is great fullness, and all sexual play is fulfilled in the moment without mind. If you are "making love" and also thinking or imagining at the same time, there is no love. Where there is felt love with your lover, there is no pornography. And this is the only form in which sexuality has any value. Sexuality without love is terrible. None of you should engage in sexual intimacy without love-desire. Do not respond to the exclusive motive in yourself that depends upon the suppression of one or the other of these two. Become sensitive to it and develop your intimate relationships to the point where they are realized in this way. And only then engage your intimacy with one another, not at any other time. Never! That is the discipline of marriage. Marriage is not the excuse to exploit your tendencies in a way that society forgives or accepts. The private ritual is not the thing served by marriage, certainly not in this Ashram!

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

When people love and desire one another, they cease to be promiscuous. People are obsessively involved with trying to control their promiscuity. They get married, but still they want to make it with other people. They play around, and they do not actually do it a lot of the time, but they feel it, they want it, and they dramatize it just short of sex. There is no real way to control promiscuity. Promiscuity is naturally undermined where there is love and desire. And where two people truly love and desire one another, they do not have to make a cult with one another. They do not have to wonder obsessively if their partner wants other people and is fooling around. That concern has nothing whatever to do with their relationship. It is completely absent, and yet without willful discipline. The only discipline is that fullness. Satsang is the discipline, not all the things by which you are motivated to control yourself. In terms of spiritual life this is true.

Just so, in terms of your intimate life, it is the force of love-desire that economizes the life process and frees it from its conventional obsessions. If that force is not there, then your marriage is insane. It is just a porno movie or an intimate, little hand-holding quietude. Where there is love-desire, there is great energy between people, and such couples intensify one another constantly. They are moved always to love one another and to express their love for one another. They do not feel self-conscious about it!

Such unions are very rare. Most people marry for erotic reasons. Some people, who are not particularly oriented to sex, marry for so-called love reasons, on the basis of the aesthetic emotion of loving, without force. But people who love and desire one another are involved in the most intimate and forceful kind of play. In such people the sexual process may be a matter of instruction at some point, so that it realizes its higher purpose and not the conventional one of release.

So you must transform your marriages. If you are not married, you must transform your sexual possibility and be free of eroticism, impotence, and frigidity. That is the way it seems to me!

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: If the life force is present, then you can truly be a celibate in that sense. You do not have to be married, because you are available to all beings.

BUBBA: Yes, but there is no call to conventional celibacy. There's no genuine motive for actually cutting off the sex process. That is bullshit. Nevertheless, all of those who are truly sexual in their orientation are celibates, because they are not involved in the conventional use of sexuality. Their sexuality does not serve their emptiness, their descended fixation in the body. They are always returning the force of life, sacrificing it to its Source. And their relationship to one another is self-intensifying, in other words, spontaneously intensifying. Their sexual relations are pure, not pure by being modest, but pure by being very forceful, very energetic, even very physical. They do not serve the ritual of limitation.

DEVOTEE: This whole culture, because of its orientation, tends to associate the words "celibate" and "ascetic" with being empty, but the two words truly mean full.

BUBBA: Right. Genuine celibacy is sexuality in Truth. It is the realization of your human functions in Truth. That realization does not involve separating yourself from others and becoming literally celibate, having no sex connection, but rather it involves fulfilling your sexual obligation. You are obliged, not by society, but by your body. Your body obliges you to be sexual and human. Therefore, you must *realize* your sexuality. You are involved in it in any case, whether or not you want to shut it off or exploit it. And so everyone is obliged to realize his functions in Truth.

Paradoxically, there is no realization without celibacy. However, celibacy must be understood in non-conventional terms. So the pure celibate is also the greatest dancer, the greatest lover, because he has realized the play of life in Truth, and it does not surrender him to bondage, to limitation. Only when you begin to love one another as well as desire one

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

another in your intimacies do you begin to enjoy in human terms the kind of fullness that I am describing. All your other strategies are reactions to your obsessions. And obsessions in most cases are obsessions with desire to the exclusion of love.

Where there is desire there is not any real attention, there is obsession, scattering of the mind, no real concentration of force, no love, only all kinds of negative emotions. So people have sex for very negative reasons. They are beating one another with sex, killing one another with it. It is a kind of ritual murder in which the woman gets killed and the man kills her, or the man gets killed and she kills him, and they get eaten, and all of that. Most sexuality is very crude, very gross, very obsessive, and belongs to the whole realm of the orientation to the body idea.

DEVOTEE: What do you mean, though, when you say that the man should overwhelm the woman?

BUBBA: Where there is love-desire, then each individual engages in the characteristic form that his or her birth implies. And so the woman is negative or passive in the body, and the male is positive and oriented toward the physical. So the male penetrates the woman. Women should not become men, aggressive in the way that men are, though they can be very active sexually. The male overwhelms the female, but in doing that he is overwhelmed by the female. The woman is Shakti to her husband. The more the male penetrates the female, the more overwhelmed he is with force, the more undone he is in the body. Not the other way around, which is the way it works out through the conventional exercise.

The usual sex act is not just the overwhelming of the woman by the male, but the degrading of the woman, her murder, her submission. And it is all very cool, as you must have observed. But the true play of sexuality is full of energy, full of force, full of movement, full of love. It overwhelms both individuals. It is the medium of the elimination of conflict in the life affair. Sexuality as it is played out conventionally is an

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

exploitation of conflict. But the real sexual union undermines all conflict, overwhelms both individuals, restores them both to a contemplative state.

But you all use your intimacies in conventional ways, to exploit what you are obsessed with and to exclude what you cannot enjoy. So your sexuality is dead. It is self-meditation. It relieves nothing, except temporarily perhaps some relief in the lower body. You are left feeling empty when you exploit intimacy in this way. Where there is genuine intimacy, the real force of love and desire, then there is great energy even in sexual play. There is no sense at all of emptiness, separation, loss, even through the orgasm. None. You are left with the same sense that you enjoyed before you played with one another.

Well, if your intimacies, your marriages, are not of this kind, then keep it in your pants until you get it straight! Require this participation of one another, and when it is alive, then you can play with one another, but not otherwise. Real sexual intimacy between individuals in the Ashram is a play with me.

CELEBRATIONS

Twice each year members of the Ashram celebrate the dissolution of the conventional approach to life, which is bondage to the cult of the body.

The first celebration, which occurs from March 15 to April 15, is a time of radical purification of the body. The subject of this occasion is regeneration, the suprarational celebration of life. Ashram members are urged to undertake a 7-10 day fast during this month, following the practices for fasting which are described in *The Eating Gorilla Comes In Peace*. The diet should also be strictly aligned with the purifying dietary practices described in that book (moderation, mainly raw foods, etc.) for the remainder of this period.

In addition to purification through fasting and right diet, this period is also an appropriate time for celibacy, in order to allow the body to regenerate its

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

sexual and general vitality. During this period of celibacy (or at least extreme moderation) the effects of sexual patterns may be observed, thereby helping to refresh one's mastery of the vital functions.

This is a celebration of freedom from concern about the body's accumulated and karmic demands. The purifying practices engaged during this time are undertaken simply as necessary and practical means to enable the body regularly to harmonize its functions. They are not approached as a means to Truth, nor as a substitute for sadhana (the conscious process). They only serve the general and ordinary health and well-being of the psycho-physical manifestation.

The second celebration or period of celebrations begins on December 15 and ends on New Year's Day.* This celebration commemorates the communication of the way of Divine Communion to the world. It is a time for setting aside the strict dietary and other personal conditions which may occupy us during the rest of the year. This is a period of celebration of freedom from vital solemnity. The subject of this occasion is life itself, or generation, the non-rational celebration of life.

During this time the accessories to the diet that are avoided on all other occasions may occasionally be enjoyed by those who choose to do so. Even so, you may find that you cannot tolerate certain accessories to the diet without ill effects. Some people, for example, cannot drink alcohol because it causes them to sink into the mood of the vital and to abandon their sadhana. Such people should not drink, or they should at least do so in moderation. Others may have had an addiction in the past which arises again during this celebration, such

*In addition to the annual celebration in December there may also be random times throughout the year when Bubba or the Persimmon staff declares such a celebration. Unless otherwise stated, members of the Ashram are invited to participate in such special celebrations at Persimmon only. Individuals and households may enjoy special holiday meals and parties with family and friends at Thanksgiving and Christmas, but they should do so responsibly, with a view toward their personal liabilities. In general, the main occasions of celebration should always be reserved for gatherings of the Community at Persimmon.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

as a heavy smoking habit. Such people should understand the liabilities of these addictions in their case and be responsible for them under the conditions of celebration.

However, during this time members of the Ashram may generally enjoy the occasional and pleasurable use of all the dietary accessories. Such are simply traditional social practices designed to be used on occasion, as a kind of life-celebration. Therefore, members of the Ashram may make use of eggs, killed food, tobacco, coffee, tea, alcoholic drinks, and even manufactured and traditional food and sweets at the various parties and other social gatherings called during that time. (However, hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana, and the like should not be used during celebrations or at any other time by members of the Ashram. Nor should anyone engage in any illegal acts or other forms of public and private disturbance.)

General relaxations of the personal conditions of sadhana are permitted during these celebrations, but the conscious life of sacrifice remains as the premise. It is not to be a period of yielding to the negative karmas hidden in life, but of the celebration of life itself. Personal behavior during such celebration is to be tempered by the spirit of celebration itself, which is a *relational* force of pleasure and love with one's friends rather than an exotic or abusive personal movement toward private intoxication, delusion, and unconsciousness.

You should know that this liberal and occasional viewpoint toward the dietary accessories and other conditions is not itself a kind of law or demand. It is simply that those who are living as members of the Ashram Community *may*, if they choose, feel free to enjoy the common social celebration in appropriate ways on the occasions when the Ashram gathers to celebrate life by temporarily abandoning the "face" of apparent disciplines of diet, life routine, and the self-conscious or cultic management of their sexuality and general human energy. Some may be unable, for reasons of health or tendency, to make use of certain of the traditional dietary accessories. Others may be

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

unable to make use of any of these traditional enjoyments, or may discover they must at least limit their use. All of that is fine. It is simply that you must discover your own natural and pleasurable discipline, with humor, free of all righteousness.

The Siddha-Guru is a paradox, a presence of humor, a free manifestation of an ordinary, pleasurable life.

SERVICE

Service is the free and humorous expression of the life of Divine Communion. It requires a new form of action relative to the world and others. The practical discipline is to engage in an active orientation toward human community and energetic, compassionate, and loving service to the common life.

Traditionally, service is done to get realized or to attain spiritual "merit." However, the true life of service is not involved in self-dramatization, self-meditation, contraction, avoidance. It is simply appropriate, relational life, done in loving devotion to the Guru, as is the case with any of the practical disciplines that assist sadhana. To whatever extent that you have the capacity, you should embrace this condition, bringing the sacrificial life you are living with Bubba to fruition in all your relationships with others.

In this service each individual assumes every form of his action during every day as a form of intense life-communication to others. In this way we fulfill our appropriate function as life-source, or source of principal food, for others. If you spend any time in the Community, you will very quickly—and without any kind of mysticism—discover that love itself, free life-energy, is what human beings really thrive on, what they in fact require of each other for very survival. As we mature in this sadhana, not only should we perform all our actions as service, but we should create various specific functions in life wherein we can intensify our service to the Guru, to other individuals, to the Ashram

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Community, and to the larger community of society in general.

The following is excerpted from one of Bubba's talks in which he elaborates on the importance of service as a practical life discipline:

Another dimension of what I require of people in the Ashram is service. There is the study of the path, which is a constant way of dealing with this understanding at the level of the written Teaching. There is the fulfilling of the life-conditions, managing sadhana in practical, personally functional terms. And there is also service. Service is a form of activity that is not self-referring by nature. It leads you into a condition in which you do not make the self-reference, in which you must be directed to others, and in which you will observe in yourself the tendency not to want to do that. You will observe the strategic ways in which you are still withholding even while you are turning towards others and serving them.

People often fail to grasp what I mean by service, because they think they are supposed to be doing it for some good reason or other. But it is just appropriate, it is relational life, it is bringing the life-force into the life-game. That is all that service is. It is to be consciously uninvolved in the unconscious drama of self-reference, self-meditation, contraction, avoidance. It is a way of living life in appropriate terms, just as the conditions relative to money, food, and sex provide a way of living life in appropriate terms. If people will serve one another, serve life, and serve the world, if they will bring life into life, allowing life to flow in life, they will make obsolete all the karmic games that are otherwise only being dramatized through ordinary actions and forms of concern.

We literally depend on other beings for our continuing existence in this form, not our ultimate existence, or even our mere vital existence (except that we depend on the sex play of others for our birth), but our human existence. We cannot exist as human beings for one more moment without participation in the communication of life that other beings give to us, and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

which the whole grand affair of the manifest world gives to us. If that communication is withdrawn, we die to what is greater than self and mere vitality, and we pass out of our humanity into some state that is not realizable in the way that we may truly experience this moment as human beings. When you realize your dependence on the conscious communication of life from others, then you see the reasonableness—or, rather, the unreasonableness—of love. Then, in spite of what the hell that guy seems to be, you bring your life to him or her in the form of real energy, real intensity, real attention. When you do that, then that person is enlivened literally, he is fed, because the life-force, particularly in the heightened form to which it is transformed in human beings, is principal food. The dimension of life that we communicate through attention to others, unobstructed, is principal food. The food that we take through the mouth is gross and secondary. The food that we take through the nose is gross and secondary. These are also necessary, generally, but they support a lower organic form of our existence. Many people eat well enough and breathe well enough, but they are depressed, insane, because they do not communicate through the eyes and through the heart. They do not enjoy the life-process in its subtle form.

It is merely intelligent, not moralistic, not a matter of yoga, to be present with life to other beings, and to expect their presence to us. We are present to one another in the form of a demand for life, a righteous demand for life. We should absolutely demand it. And we should finally discover what it is we are demanding of one another, which is life, intensity, love, conscious energy. We absolutely need it to survive. And so we should cut through all the crap that we give to one another and absolutely demand that, settle for nothing less, and also settle for nothing less in ourselves. We should submit to that righteous demand in others.

That is the politics of life. That is what life is all about, apart from all the economics, and food, and bullshit. That is basically what we are here to do with one another. We are here to communicate life itself

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

through the faculties of our humanity. And that is merely a natural and righteous discipline. It is appropriate for you as a discipline to bring your own presence as life to other beings and to demand it from them. And that is simply appropriate in the same way that it is appropriate to take a meal several times a day.

DEVOTEE: It seems like we're always demanding life from another in a childish way.

BUBBA: We settle for less than life. A smile, a piece of ass, a cigarette, that is sufficient. We don't really require life of one another, and that is what we need. You cannot survive in your truly human functions without it. If you all were busy truly loving one another, truly being present to one another without complication, without making any assumptions about one another or yourselves, you could live for a long time, and even if you lived for only 20 years, you would be happy, at least on those ordinary human levels. You would be feeding one another, and you could die happily if you happened to have to die some day. Because everybody would be with you. They would be holding your hand and shooting you full of conscious life. You would be loved, free, not prevented from Truth, and who cares then?[14]

In the most practical terms, this condition of service requires that you observe yourself in relationship and begin to serve, literally serve, those with whom you come in contact. At the most obvious level, service takes the form of doing something for someone else, not in a smiling and gleeful way, calling attention to the fact that you're a wonderful guy, but easily, without self-reference.

You may have particularly strong resistances to certain people, in whose company you feel anger, righteousness, or other strong and negative feelings. Serve those you have conflict with, rather than engaging in gossip, complaint, and righteousness in their company, all of which are forms of withdrawal or contraction-reaction. And really serve, that is, direct

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

your being and energy to their good and well-being.

When you have conflict with someone, it will not help you to try to identify and analyze the reasons for your difficulties. There are no reasons, there are only justifications for withdrawing the life-force. And it is not simply a matter of not loving that person. Observe yourself in that relationship and you will see that you are actively manufacturing non-love toward him. Your appropriate activity, then, is not to try to create love for him, since what you create will be self-consciousness and not love. You do not have to love him at all. Simply direct your energy to him, serve him, sacrifice your refusal to share the life-force with him. The more you understand under the conditions of such service, the more such service will itself be revealed to be love.

Fulfilling the condition of service requires you to realize in your own life your appropriate function as conscious life-source for others, to observe in relationship your strategic tendencies to obstruct this function, and to find very specific and practical ways to increase your useful service to all other beings.

TURNING THROUGH THE CONDITIONS

As you can see, these practical conditions do not represent feats of ascetic self-denial. They are very natural, appropriate, life-supporting ways of managing our humanity. In fact, to live this way is not really difficult, and it feels good! But in this Community you will never, *never!* have a chance to really get your vital life together as a perfect or near-perfect performance of these conditions. If eventually you find yourself adhering strictly to the conditions, without effort, it will happen spontaneously long after you have lost every kind of interest in such an existence. Because this way of Divine Communion is a humorous way of life, in which you are always being undone, and in which everything you do must come alive as a form of turning and service to the Guru. So all of your attainments, in health, work, you name it, will sooner or later be upset and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

your attention to them dissolved again in the simple happiness of your relationship to the Guru.

You are required to *turn* to Bubba and serve him through these conditions. That is what they are for. The sadhana of the first (practical) stage of the way of Divine Communion is not fulfilled or mature until you have begun to live all of the ordinary conditions of your life as conscious service or sacrifice to the Guru in God. If the Guru were not here as a living miracle of Grace, if Divine Communion were not our present possibility, we all might as well eat, drink, and orgy ourselves to death, blow our brains out, or cruelly mistreat each other, because life in itself—even radiantly healthy, full, and loving life in itself—simply does not avail. But Bubba is here. God is Present! And it is the turning that counts.

The following is a conversation between Bubba and one of his intimate devotees on just what this turning amounts to:

You must, through the experiencing of the effects of your karmic, recoiled life, see that its destiny is entirely negative, regardless of how you manipulate it. And only then can you become capable of submitting to the real form, the sacrificial form that is appropriate relative to each of your functions. Therefore, you turn the mind into attention. You turn the emotion into love. You turn the body into presentation or relationship. It is a painful discipline, but where there is insight or real sympathy with the Guru, it becomes possible. And wherever it is done, to whatever degree it is done, the force of contraction becomes obsolete. The functions come to rest. You rest more and more naturally, contemplatively in the Guru's Company and begin to intuit his communication, his Nature.

DEVOTEE: Bubba, it used to seem that it was so easy for me to turn to you. I just turned to you all the time, but it is very hard for me now. I feel very much turned to you now because I have been in your company for two days. And I know that I could wake up tomorrow and it might be over. Anyway it seems that it doesn't

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

have anything to do with me.

BUBBA: Obviously this turning to me is a discipline, not something you do by tendency. It is difficult, so that obligation must be a certainty in you, especially in those moments and under those conditions when it is most difficult.

DEVOTEE: I don't see that, Bubba. That's what I wanted to ask you about. I don't understand it that way. It seems to me that when I feel that way, all I can do is say, "Bubba, I don't understand this."

BUBBA: It has nothing to do with understanding.

DEVOTEE: I mean that I feel I can't do anything about it.

BUBBA: You can't do anything about it, *but* you *can turn to* me.

DEVOTEE: What I'm asking you is, I feel that you turn to me then. You know, I just ask you for your Grace.

BUBBA: I am always turned to you. But you can turn to me regardless of what is happening. You cannot do anything about all that is happening in you. Doing something relative to what appears in you is not the focus of this way. The focus is stepping aside from all the strategies you want to create, positive and negative, relative to your usual condition, and simply turning to me. You will notice over time that the tendencies in you become weak and even disappear. But your obligation is simply to turn to me, without measuring that turning against what is happening with you. Simply turn your attention to me, turn your emotion as love to me, make yourself present to me with your life.

DEVOTEE: When I surrender that....

BUBBA: Simply do this turning.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: Then I can't surrender it.

BUBBA: You can do this turning.

DEVOTEE: I mean that when I turn to you, I know you are just Grace. Isn't that the same thing?

BUBBA: Yes, in a certain sense it is the same thing, but what I am talking about is very simple.

DEVOTEE: I don't understand what you are saying, Bubba.

BUBBA: Turn your attention to me and do not measure that turning relative to whether or not your mind stops and you feel better. Love me and do not measure that against whether or not you still feel negative emotions and confusion. Give your life to me, turn to me bodily, recollect me at all times, whether I'm physically present with you or not, and do not measure that activity against whether or not you feel pains in your body. Maintain that discipline of turning to me. It can be done, as long as you do not associate that turning with the reading of the problems in you. The turning can always be done. You are never disabled in terms of that turning. It is only these effects, because you are always reading them and wanting to manipulate them, that make you doubt your ability to turn.

But you can always turn. That is the principle wherein these effects become obsolete, not in that moment necessarily, although on some occasions they disappear immediately. But ultimately they disappear, because they are not being used. What you are doing is this turning. They are simply memories presently communicating themselves as your functions. They are a kind of remembering. But when your conscious life becomes participation in relationship to me, then these effects become obsolete. It is not for you to measure that process, to decide when they should become obsolete. Be willing to have these things arise in you forever. Make your business turning to me.[15]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

APPROACHING THE GURU: PRASAD AND DARSHAN

All I am doing is just keeping you present while I am Present, and that is sufficient. That is the whole of sadhana. Everything else is an elaboration of that.[16]

Spend time in the Guru's Company—it is that simple. Bubba is always creating ways to bring people into contact with him. He is very jealous of his devotees' attention! If someone is away, Bubba wants to know where. If a devotee has not come to Persimmon in some time, Bubba will want to know why. Much more, perhaps, than they are aware of it, the Guru is interested and actively inquires about his devotees' welfare. Should someone decide to abandon Satsang and leave him and the Community, Bubba feels it, literally and painfully. To him this relationship is absolutely the living core of his spiritual work with us, and thus the only purpose of his existence on earth. He is always drawing us close to his physical presence, and through that, into his very Presence.

There are several formal occasions on which all members of the Community enjoy Bubba's physical presence. He usually sits with us during formal presentations by members of the Community and often takes questions at that time. Whenever he intends to accept questions he will indicate it to an attendant or to everyone present. If you have a question, raise your hand and Bubba will acknowledge you if he wants to receive your question. Any genuine question is appropriate at those times. You may feel your question is of a particularly private nature, but keep in mind that almost any question can provide a forum for Bubba to make replies that may interest all members of the Ashram. And all replies Bubba makes to questions delivered in our group gatherings are recorded on tape for future interest, whereas private conversations are not. Be sure always to ask your questions audibly and clearly, so everyone may understand.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

There are other, even more formal occasions when the Community may come to enjoy Bubba's Presence. These are Prasad, Darshan, and formal Satsang or meditation.

PRASAD

The formal occasion of Prasad is very moving and beautiful, and it is a perfect image of the nature of this process of Satsang or Divine Communion. The Guru sits in his seat in the Communion Hall, merely Present. One by one, members of the Community come forward to bow at his feet, leave a simple gift of flowers or fruit, take Prasad, and return to their seats. Prasad, literally, means "the return of a gift to the giver." The fruit that people take from trays or other devotees near Bubba's feet in the hall is charged with the radiance of his Presence. It is not specifically intended to have a mystical effect on people. It is simply the reminder of his Presence and the visible sign of his Grace. Bubba is always there to meet us. When we turn to him, we find him already turned to us, always giving the gift of very God.

A true devotee is always approaching the Guru with gratitude for the Teaching and his Presence, always laying his life down at the Guru's feet, always offering his service and surrender in the form of his simple gifts. When you approach Bubba, whether in your home, in a place you have set aside for the private recollection of the Guru, or in the presence of his human form, you should never come empty-handed. Empty hands imply that you have already surrendered everything and all of you, which is a lie and an offense to the Guru. And anyone who comes as a devotee, not a seeker, already knows full well that he has hardly begun to surrender! So Bubba says, "Always bring me as much of yourself as you can carry in two hands." In other words, let your gift truly represent the yielding of your entire separate, unhappy life. The most appropriate

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

gifts are flowers or fruit. Their quality and your intention are most important. Bubba has recently spoken of how people tend to give offerings as if in church, as an obligation, and then take Prasad as if selecting bananas in a fruit stand!

All gifts are forms and signs of sacrifice. Give to Bubba with your heart, not to satisfy a demand for self-gratification, but as an expression of the quality of your life of turning to him. You may choose to give Bubba an uncommon gift, more than the traditional one of fruit or flowers, but even then do not let either the choosing or the giving become an attempt to gain his special attention, to entertain him, or to fulfill some feeling you have that you must, on special occasions, present him with something unusual. The giving of material gifts to the Guru should be a test and a demonstration of your relationship to him in God.

> *A man should not approach his Guru in order to carry on his search. He should approach his Guru with devotion, as one who has found, and put his search down at his Guru's feet. The true disciple is a devotee who simply lives with his Guru. That is the spiritual practice or sadhana of Satsang. Every bit of seeking, dilemma and self-obsession that you lay down is your true gift to the Guru. All gifts symbolize that true and inner gift, and make it visible. A man may bring a flower to his Guru. The flower is very fresh and fragrant. When he smiles and puts it on the ground or in a vase it may all seem like a pleasantry. But what is represented by that flower could be the most difficult crisis of his life. The truth of that flower, of that gift, is the crisis itself.*[17]

"Prasad Day" is held once a month at Persimmon. Prasad Day is a special community celebration of the sacrament of Satsang, or Divine Communion. On Prasad Day, Guru-seva, or the function of service to the Lord in the form of the Guru, is celebrated and made visible in a special way. It is the time when each of us

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

comes to Bubba with a special offering, usually of fruit or flowers, symbolizing our most significant gift, which is the search. On Prasad Day each of us acknowledges Bubba as Guru, the discovery of whom makes all seeking unnecessary.

Several times every year Prasad Day is held to commemorate some special spiritual event, such as the realization of the Heart, or Bubba's birthday, or Guru Day, which is a traditional annual celebration of the Guru's Presence. Those special celebrations are themselves unique versions of Prasad Day, just as Prasad Day is a unique version or celebration of Satsang itself.

One reason for the formalities on Prasad Day and at other times is to show one another that the Guru is not just a human form to be worshipped in ignorance. Bubba is not an idol or a cultic image intended to fascinate and subdue disturbed people. He is a function for the Ashram of all his devotees. The same Guru who serves you in human form serves you also after the death of that form. He is the eternal Guru. If you are not always aware of this, you become full of doubt, contemptuous, and envious, thinking that Bubba is enjoying the show business of cultic life in the manner of a spiritual entertainer. So we must not deal informally and commonly with the Guru simply because he is present in human form. We must serve the human Guru as the living function of the Divine. It is not the human limitation of the Guru that is the initiator of Satsang. It is the eternal Guru, the Maha-Siddha, the Lord, the Divine Form. The greatest sin of all is to approach the living Guru as a limited form, separate from the Lord.

But when we approach Bubba as devotees, in Divine Communion with him, then even the most informal and apparently droll, human moments with him are charged with our intuitive acknowledgment of his Divine Nature and our gratitude for the Prasad of his Presence. This makes for a profoundly different quality of life than you may have experienced in the world. You may be trading puns with Bubba, laughing with him, watching TV or even drinking uproariously

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

with him at one of the occasional Ashram celebrations, but if you are always turning and yielding your self-possession to him in Satsang, then you will constantly and only be standing in the Presence of God, which is radiant, sublime, silent, solemn and awesome without being somber, full of humor and sheer delight, independent of the qualities or circumstances of life at the moment.

I am alive as Amrita Nadi, the Heart and its spire, the Bright or Conscious Light. This is always so. When I come to you I intensify the field of Brightness, the field of uncreated Light that rests above your head and which is drawn down into the body when the mind lies formless in the Heart. Whenever I have been with you I have done this from the Heart. The communication of the Heart and its Light are my constant practice. Therefore, such is the constant realization of those who always live in Satsang with me, who know I am always Present with them, even if I do not appear to them. This is why the various phenomena of your spiritual lives have arisen or been intensified, purified and made intelligent whenever you have been mindful of me. I am always offering this Prasad. When you come to me you should come with the appropriate attitude. You should come prepared to give me your gifts, the surrendering of your seeking. You should come to turn to me, to accept my Prasad, and to use it in life and service to me. If you make your relationship to me the condition of your life, if you make Satsang your sadhana, I will give myself to you entirely, and the Life, Light and very Existence that is Amrita Nadi, the Form of Reality, will thus be communicated to you while you are alive.

Prasad is my gift to devotees, my help to disciples. Prepare yourself. I want true devotees, not seekers. I am the Siddha-Guru, the Prasad, the Object and Process of Meditation for my devotees. My teaching is this: Turn to me and Understand.[18]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DARSHAN

Like Prasad, the occasion of Darshan is a traditionally well-known and sacred occasion of honoring and enjoying the Guru's Presence. At Persimmon Bubba regularly gives Prasad and sits for Darshan, usually several times a week.

> *Darshan—literally, a seeing, a vision, a sight of. The term commonly refers to the blessings granted by Guru or God. The Guru gives "his" blessing by making his appearance, by allowing himself to be seen, meditated upon, or known. God gives "his" blessing in the same way, especially by appearing in the form of the Guru and his activities.* [19]

So formal Darshan is a very important and significant event in the Community. It is a time when the Guru literally appears in front of you and gives his blessing to you simply by being there in physical form. The extent to which you make use of this occasion, then, depends upon what you do when you are with him at the time. Everything is shown in Darshan, absolutely everything. Merely by making his appearance, the Guru is showing you very God. And all that is necessary is for you to sit with him and contemplate his Form. Darshan is not a time for you to make yourself visible to the Guru, or for you to get involved with your subjective notions about him. To do that is to turn away, to avoid what is sitting right before your very eyes, which is only God. Thus, the occasion of Darshan—and in fact every moment in Bubba's physical presence is Darshan—directly expresses the whole principle and core of the Divine work, the miracle of God's appearance and life with us through the paradoxical Presence of the Guru.

Bubba makes himself available for formal Darshan on weekends, usually Saturdays, and especially invites new devotees and those who do not otherwise have much personal contact with him to enjoy his Company in this way. New devotees tend to feel a little self-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

conscious around Bubba in any case. And when they come to him in a situation in which he perhaps does not acknowledge them in any way whatsoever, it becomes more disorienting and unsettling. Bubba has had this to say about contemplation of the Guru:

People have traditionally used paintings and images of the Guru or Saints or symbols of the Divine. They have looked at these images and fixed on them as objects of meditation in order to quiet the mind. They would either look at a physical image placed in front of them or recollect its duplicate in the mind. They would constantly return to the repetition of a name, a word, a mantra in order to quiet the mind, to continually interrupt the tendency to become involved in the flow of thoughts and reactions. Some of you think that you are supposed to be doing that when you are sitting with me in the Ashram Communion Hall. You think that by fixing your attention visually on my picture or my body you can stop the flow of thoughts.

If a man takes out his wallet and looks at his wife's picture, does he do this in order to stop his thoughts? Where does this motivation come from? A person doesn't look at pictures of his loved ones in order to stop the flow of thoughts. People look at such pictures for the enjoyment of it, as a recollection of those they love when they are not physically present with one another. The picture is not an end in itself. You don't fix your attention on the picture. The picture just reawakens your attunement with that one. So the photographs that we carry of those we love are expressions of our relationship with them. When we enjoy our relationship with one another, we are not concerned about whether we have thoughts or not. Our concentration on the one in the picture is natural at that moment because we fully and spontaneously enjoy that person himself. We look at these photographs for fun and pleasure, in order to enjoy this loving contemplation. That is natural recollection and contemplation.

But when a person contemplates the Guru or the Divine, suddenly this contemplation must have all

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

kinds of other qualities. It must stop his thoughts! That expectation is just a sign that he is not naturally inclined to his Guru. Just so, enjoying formal Darshan (in the Guru's physical presence, or through the instrument of his photograph or recollected memory) is an expression of your relationship to the Guru. It is not a meditative technique. It is simply a natural way of recollecting this attunement with the Guru, with the Teacher and his Teaching.

The relationship between the devotee and the Guru must be as natural and as simple and as spontaneous as the relationship between lovers. It is only because people are not inclined to the Guru that they expect something else to happen. Sitting in the physical presence of the Guru should be simple and natural, just as if a loved one has walked into the room. When it becomes natural, simple, and open-hearted, without self-consciousness, then the Divine process has room, it has a function.

The man who is still stuck with his thinking, his tendencies, his distractions, is unwilling to turn truly to the Guru. He uses the Guru's appearance as a method for quieting his thoughts, instead of simply living openly as the devotee of the Guru, available to the Guru's argument, discipline, and person. If you live in continuous relationship to the Guru, you will also begin to observe this whole process of thinking and of action. You will begin to feel in yourself the strategy that you are always up to. Therefore, Satsang involves living in conscious relationship to the Guru, not just fixing attention on him. And living in the presence of the Guru becomes more and more fullness and devotion. [20]

As this sadhana of Divine Communion matures in you, the Darshan of the Guru will take on increasingly profound dimensions. Bubba points out that to be capable of such contemplation in its most mature expression requires a realized life of sadhana:

The Guru in the world, the Guru who is physically present, is a direct manifestation of Amrita Nadi, the Form of Reality. He is alive as That. He is That ab-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

solutely. His visible human form is an absolute reflection of the Perfect Form, and a perfect communication of it. Therefore, to contemplate and become completely absorbed in the Form and Life and Presence of the Guru is to be continually attentive to his ultimate communication, the communication of his ultimate Nature which is also your own. Thus, to become capable of contemplating or meditating on the Guru's Form is the ultimate capacity of a devotee. And the Guru's Form is his simple physical form, his subtle appearances, his cosmic, universal, and perfect manifestations. But, first and last, it is Very Form, Amrita Nadi, the Form of God, Guru, and Self which stands forever in the Heart.

True meditation on the Guru is nothing you can successfully try and do. It must awaken in you in the midst of a life of Divine Communion. It will be the fruit of your sadhana. But, certainly, from the very beginning, some form of this meditation can be the case for you. Whatever the latent or chronic quality of the individual, there is from the beginning some capacity to become absorbed in reflection on the Guru, on his physical form, on his words, on his entire communication, on all his forms, in every way it is possible to be aware of him. In every case it is possible to think of the Guru, to contemplate the Guru, to be with the Guru, and to serve him.[21]

PREPARING A PLACE FOR FORMAL PRASAD, DARSHAN, AND SATSANG

(NOT TRADITIONAL MEDITATION)

You should prepare a place in your household where you can give gifts to the Guru and receive them back as Prasad, a place where you can sit in quiet recollection of the Guru and the arguments of his Teaching. The place should be kept clean and attractive. Keep the Guru's picture there. The best place is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

one in which no other activity is carried out, if this is possible. It is also preferable that you do not use a part of your bedroom for this purpose, if possible, since the qualities of sleep linger in the room even after you are awake and may be a distraction, however subtle, to your naturally conscious activities there.

Whenever you come and go from your place of formal Satsang, bow to Bubba's Presence, touching your head to the floor, as you would if you approached him in the Communion Halls of the Ashram. Whenever you pass by that place, acknowledge Bubba briefly with a slightly bowed head and with hands pressed together in a respectful gesture at the level of the heart, just as you would do if you passed by him casually in the Ashram. These are the simple formalities of Satsang, of acknowledgment of the Divine Guru with whom we enjoy the happiness of life in God.

It is important that you harmonize the body's posture when you are sitting with the Guru, whether at home or in the places of the Community. The half-lotus (the "easy" posture) and the lotus posture are perhaps the best for such sitting. (Sitting "Japanese style," over the shins, with the feet touching, is a possible alternative.) In these postures the legs are crossed and the circuit of energy in the body is closed. If the legs (or the feet) are apart, the current of force in the body is broken and turned toward the waking world of ordinary activity.

If you cannot yet sit in one of these cross-legged postures, you should practice daily, using *Conscious Exercise and the Transcendental Sun* as your reference. But do not try to sit this way in formal Satsang until you can sit in these postures comfortably. You should be comfortable in the Guru's Company, so that your attention is not on the body, or your physical, vital life.

Not only the position of the limbs is important, but the general stability of the entire body. Therefore, you should generally not sit in formal Satsang directly after taking food, but you should wait until the digestive processes of the body have quieted. In addition, if you are constantly shifting or getting cramps in various areas of the body, that is a sign there is constriction of

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

force. Postures such as the lotus help to stabilize the body, so that it is firmly and comfortably seated, with the circuit of body energy closed. In such a case the body cannot sway or rock, nor will you feel constantly moved to change its position.

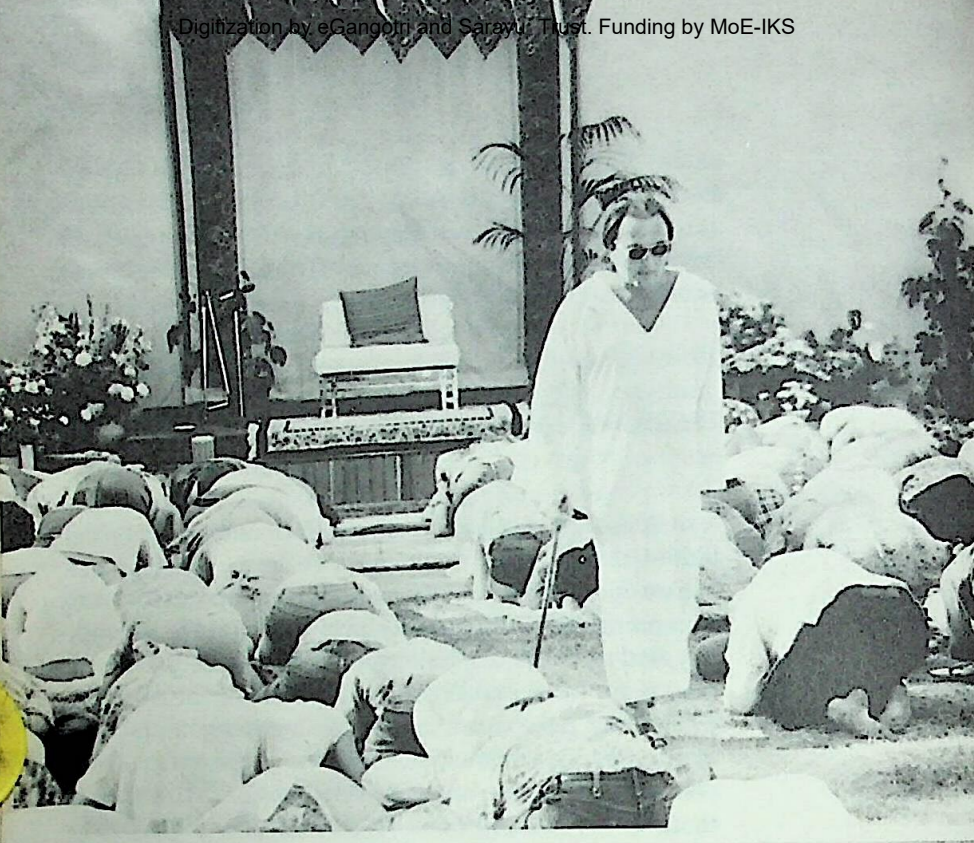
PHENOMENA THAT MAY ARISE IN THE GURU'S COMPANY

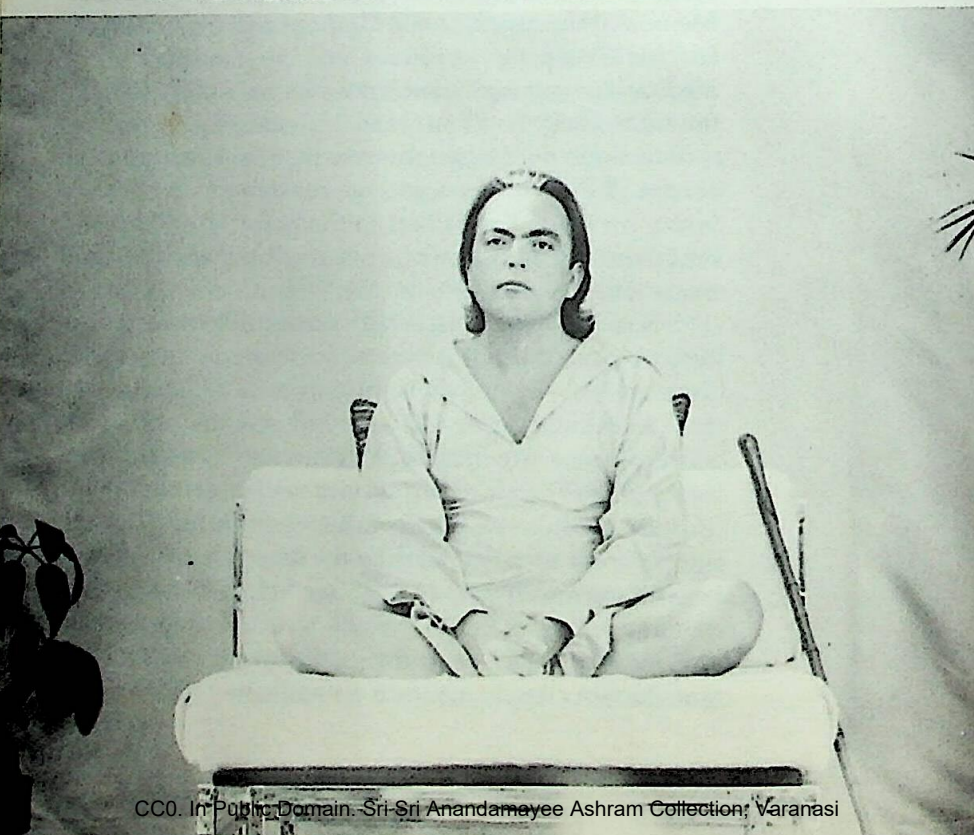
When an individual comes in contact with the Siddhi that is alive in this work, he may experience various yogic and mystical phenomena, all of which are a common, though not necessary, sign that his psycho-physical vehicles are being purified. Such experiences may occur in formal Prasad or Darshan, or at any time of the day once you have begun to enjoy a spiritual relationship to Bubba. Bubba discusses these phenomena and the appropriate response to them in all three of the source books (*The Knee of Listening, The Method of the Siddhas,* and *Garbage and the Goddess*). In the Company of the Guru you may become meditative, you may experience visions, lights, sounds, intuitive insights. You may experience kriyas, or spontaneous purifying movements, which manifest as abrupt jerking in the spine, gestures with the hands, heavy breathing, great heat in the body, growling and other vocalizations, feelings of great bliss and joy, and many other movements in the body.

Some people are especially susceptible to various of these experiences. Others rarely experience them. They are a natural result of the purifying force of Satsang, but not a necessary one. Kriyas and visions and other extraordinary experiences are not the end-phenomena of Satsang. Therefore, it does you neither good nor ill to experience them or not to experience them. They are simply to be surrendered from the heart, like everything else that arises. If you do not have kriyas or visions, do not be concerned. Rather, apply yourself to sadhana. If you do experience such things, do not be deluded by attachment. Apply yourself to sadhana.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS





CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Many spiritual paths value these phenomena as equivalent to Truth (with the corresponding implication that if you do not have or value such experiences, you cannot and do not know Truth). They prescribe methods whereby one can acquire these experiences, and therefore, it is believed, become enlightened. But these movements are signs of purification and functional change, not enlightenment. They are merely experiences, not Truth. They have nothing to do with Truth. As you will see, it is far, far better to be already happy in Communion with God than to be distracted by any kind of secondary spiritual phenomenon.

To the common man, the possibility of such experiences is bizarre, absorbing. It seems to promise all kinds of adventure and very salvation! But to a devotee of Bubba Free John in this Community, such experiences are simply a part of ordinary experience. Because of our tendencies, we are inclined to get distracted by them, but because of our foundation in Divine Communion, we also find the easy capacity to yield them and to begin to appreciate them as very ordinary phenomena indeed, no more enlightening than breakfast.

Experiences in themselves are just a way to become attached. The experience that you have at any moment represents a unique moment in your own case. The events in themselves, which are possible elements in the spiritual process, are not to be exploited, held on to, nor are they to be prevented. Either one of these strategies is false. If you hold on to the experience, it ceases to be a lesson and becomes a form of bondage. On the other hand, when I make a lesson out of someone's experience and he deliberately sacrifices that experience, surrenders it, very often he turns into another mode of living in which he prevents experience. He lapses into mediocrity, a ritual and strategic ordinariness, and holds on to that.

The fundamental process is in consciousness, not in all of the functions with which consciousness tends to be associated. You may have experiences of changes in the body, experiences of movements in the vital and in the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

nervous system, visions in the psychic or subtle dimensions, and insights in the mental dimension. These are all modifications of your life-functions. The fundamental event is in consciousness, and consciousness is continuous, itself unmodified. The real spiritual process is an ongoing present conscious affair for which you must be responsible.

The real spiritual process doesn't just happen. It isn't a fixed event, after which everything is groovy. Events happen, but consciousness is never modified by them. Experience is just an exaggerated modification of one's functional state. It does not produce illumination. It does not produce anything of ultimate value. The only value experiences have is relative to consciousness itself. Your surrendering in the midst of experiences of all kinds leads you to the life of a true devotee, and the life of a true devotee is one in which the force of real Consciousness, the Divine intuition, is brought to life from hour to hour.

Life itself is just change, limitation, so the true spiritual process does not begin with the initiation of experience. The spiritual process is only begun when consciousness becomes the overriding factor of continued existence. It is a force in life. It is brought to us. Consciousness in itself masters and creates the ultimate transformation of life by making life responsive to the Divine. Experience itself is just a modification of life, a modification of functions. You could have a vision every five seconds for eternity and it would not produce the ultimate event of conscious life.

Experience in itself only modifies conscious life, makes you subject to change in itself, limits you, binds you. All these modifications are not producing your transformation in Truth, because they themselves are not lasting. They are themselves a demand, an argument for the enactment of a conscious existence from moment to moment. Living that conscious existence is a creative, ongoing, present affair. It never comes to an end. There is no end phenomenon in this process, because Consciousness in itself is the ultimate Reality. That very Consciousness must become the Presence as which you live, in which you represent

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

yourself. Consciousness itself must become the Principle, rather than the experiential drama of life, high or low, to which you tend to make very Consciousness subject.

All your experiences are just a meal, just fertilizer. They themselves are always disappearing, becoming obsolete. But the true force of spiritual life, or life in Truth, is implied in their existence. They are themselves a demand to one who understands. Because they are temporary, because they are dying, they themselves serve the ultimate realization or mastery. We have so many functional areas to which we are tending to retreat that spiritual realization seems to be a long, agonizing affair. But as soon as you begin to catch the thread of that process, as soon as you begin to live this conscious life of Satsang, then the complexion of it all is transformed. Even so, it is only to the degree that you yourself, as your very Nature, move into life, in the midst of experiences, that the true spiritual process is awakened. The phenomena of experience are not to be excluded, but they themselves, if they appear, represent only an argument, a demand for Satsang, for conscious life. They are not a path.

People are continually tending to become bound by the force of events. They begin to assume that the cosmic process, the process that they know only in ordinary life terms, or that they know through supercosmic visions or experiences, is itself spiritual life or life in Truth. But it is not. It is another form of slavery, it is just Shakti manifestation, the cosmic display, none of which leads to realization.

Nothing that occurs in the entire, infinite affair of the cosmos leads *to realization. It is only change. So mere involvement in the apparent influences of the Guru-Siddhi in terms of force-manifestations is not meditation. It is not true spiritual life. It ultimately represents only an argument for real meditation, a demand for Self-realization, for the conscious process.*

People enjoy varying degrees of sensitivity to the force-manifestations. The play of life, gross and subtle, is reflected in different ways on an experiential level in each person, but in every person real enjoyment of the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Divine can occur with the same kind of intensity. The manifestation of force, of cosmic energy, light, and mind, differs in each individual according to his karmic disposition at any moment, but the Power and Condition of Consciousness is absolute.

I don't care what vision or movement you had last night. It is gone, and we are sitting here today. Are you more conscious? Are you living the force of your conscious life with more intensity at this moment than you were yesterday? Or are you more involved in your bullshit, in more demands, more fascinations, more inclinations, more mediocrity, more low energy, more stupidity, more insensitivity? Is that what you are involved in? If that is what you are involved in, you have missed the point. You have been sucked in again. You have turned again to your own dilemma.

The real sign that the spiritual process is taking place is not your experiences, insights, knowledge, your change of life state, or anything else you have acquired in the process—the peculiar ritual you are involved with when you wake up in the morning. All those things are themselves modifications, changes. The peculiar sign of the awakening of the spiritual process is in a form of action of which you were previously incapable because the strategy you were enacting prevented it. That action is the process of Consciousness and of sacrifice, senior to life, sound, mind, and light.[22]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Sadhana in our Community is based on a very simple principle: simply to live in the Guru's Company. That is basically it. Abiding always in the Guru's Company becomes sacrifice and God-Realization. This principle or simple Condition becomes quite elaborate in the actual life of a person because he is complicated with all kinds of assumptions. By tendency he reflects the force of the Guru in various ways. While he enjoys this simple continuous relationship with me, he also takes on various levels of responsibility, depending on his character. In principle, everyone does sadhana in this simple way that I have described. However, in practice sadhana is developed in essentially two ways in the Ashram. One way, the way of Divine Communion, is fundamental to all. The other way is a special development of the way of Divine Communion that appears in the case of those who have the capacity it requires.

The way of Divine Communion is the simple living in my Company, but it also involves, first of all, responsibilities at a life-level that minimize the exploitation of life, the indulgence of life, to the point of stably maintaining a kind of discipline. This discipline develops over time as control of diet, control of sexuality, and control of the life-process in general to make yourself fit for work and service to others.

The responsibility of the way of Divine Communion is simply one of beginning to act in a new way. In this Teaching suffering is regarded to be a kind of action, not a state, not something happening to you. Suffering is seen to be your own activity, a contraction that is dramatized in life as the avoidance of relationship. Therefore, in relationship to me, in constant remembrance of me, in constant service to me, the individual engages in a new form of action that is the opposite of what he tends to do. It is not a form of action in the conventional sense, by which you cut things away from yourself or discipline yourself with a fierce self-conscious energy. It is simply a way of

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

moving the functions of life into relationship, performing them as service to me, and conforming them to the natural laws that they should truly represent.

This action is itself fulfillment of the great Law, which is sacrifice. When this humorous, loving, devotional life begins to become stable and the individual becomes sensitive to my Presence, my spiritual influence, then he also moves his subjective functions into my service. Thus, there are responsibilities of a subtle kind that involve the use of internal mechanisms relative to the subtle being. This stage of his practice is just an extended form of the same responsibility by which he was obliged to turn his ordinary life to me. The subtler stages of practice (the breathing of the Guru-Presence and the practice of the God-Name) develop further in a higher devotional form of contemplation of the Guru, the installment of the Guru as one's own consciousness, and the natural sacrifice, not the burdensome, self-conscious sacrifice, but the natural sacrifice of the ego, of the mind, of desires, of the body, of the world perception. When the individual becomes more responsible for his spiritual relationship to me, when his subjective life has become a matter of responsibility in my Company, and he shows the evidence of a kind of living intelligence, the ability to observe what arises, to understand, and to use the process of self-observation as a discipline, and when he demonstrates the ability to inspect critically the content of life and enjoy control over its phenomena as an activity that is fundamental to his existence, then his sadhana may develop in the way of Understanding. In that case, he will add to the principle of new or right action the principle of intelligence, or the comprehension of the nature of all action and the restoration of Consciousness to its natural, intuitive state.

The complications that we call sadhana represent kinds of responsibility relative to one's action in one's conscious life in my Company. But, fundamentally, sadhana is simple in concept for everyone in the Ashram. The Condition that we call Satsang or Divine Communion is the principle of sadhana for all. They

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

continually return to it, even though they may live it as all kinds of responsibilities. That simple intuitive relationship to me that is just a matter of living in my Company with attention is the principle enjoyed from the beginning and is the sufficient form of sadhana in the Graceful form in which it is made available through the agency of the human Guru.

Therefore, the unique possibility that this sadhana represents and which has been communicated by all the Siddhas in the past does not depend on strategic and self-conscious application of yourself towards some superior goal or change of state. But through the immediacy of the presentation of the Guru, through attention to the Guru, the realization of the Guru becomes that of the devotee. This is the spiritual possibility that has been communicated by all the Siddhas.[23]

So far in *No Remedy* we have considered the foundation of sadhana with Bubba Free John, and we have outlined the practical disciplines and formal enjoyments of life in his Company. Now we need to consider the unfolding of more mature stages of sadhana with him—not to present you with esoteric practices that you may "try out" for yourself, but to show the process in its fullness, and to indicate in concrete terms the all-inclusive form of realization that Divine Communion with Bubba Free John amounts to for all who live it with intensity.

The way of Divine Communion includes four specific stages of maturity:

1) The first stage is primarily the foundation of a devotional life in which ordinary, human actions become realized and are enjoyed as service and remembrance of the Guru. This is the life of the conditions that we have discussed earlier. It is the humanizing stage of this life.

2) The second stage is the beginning of the spiritualizing process that awakens in Bubba's Company. It involves the voluntary exercise of the Guru-Presence of God from the heart that coordinates the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

body, the life-force, and the mind with the breath. It is at this point that the devotee begins to become sensitive to and responsible for the subtler functions of his existence, again through sacrifice of self and submission to the Guru's Presence. In this second stage, you will begin very consciously to enjoy spiritual intimacy with the Guru.

3) The third stage is a continuation and elaboration of the second. It involves the further awakening of profound and subtle dimensions of life and consciousness, and the devotee's sacrifice of them to the Guru. It is at this point that you begin to use the Name of "God" along with the practice of the breath of God.

4) In the final stage of practice the Guru is "installed" in the very being of the devotee as the Form of his own conscious existence. This ecstatic and maddening contemplation of Bubba in Truth proceeds through three distinct phases, and matures in the third phase as the progressively more perfect realization of God. Now, having realized and sacrificed both his humanity and his spirituality, the devotee becomes literally identical with the Divine. He becomes a true devotee.

YOU'VE GOT TO THROW IT DOWN EVERY DAY
(The First Stage of Practice)

There remains only one thing to be said about the first stage of this life of Divine Communion: It is no mean or small event for one's human life to be truly turned over to the Guru. As Bubba said earlier, we all represent chronic movements of self-limitation in space and time. The karmic forces that we engage without consciousness in order to appear in this earthly realm are no more free than the qualities of our lives themselves. According to Bubba and all the Siddhas, we have been suffering this same condition, this whole

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

morass of difficulty, confusion, and misery, for literally eons. That is what the karmic process amounts to, and that is what each one of us represents as a living being, no matter how holy or powerful we may appear. So to make the transition from a life of karmic action to a life of sacrifice to the Divine as and in the Guru represents already a profound transformation of the quality of our existence in this world.

In most cases the first stage of sadhana is the most difficult stage to realize. It has the most theatre associated with it, and it involves a most profound transformation of the content and condition of life that the devotee has always lived with, that he most identifies with. It is his sense of identity that is implicated in that first level of practice. To turn his whole ordinary, self-obsessed life into service to God is the most profound turnabout that can be made by a living being. Therefore, it is not a mickey mouse level of sadhana at all. If it is truly realized, with great energy, it is the most significant stage of sadhana, it is the foundation stage, it makes everything else much easier, much simpler—simpler in principle, simpler in conception, simpler to manage practically.

To the degree that that foundation stage is not fully realized, is mediocre, the other stages are much more difficult, because they lack the strength that must be their support. All of the energy that is available to the second, third, and fourth stages of that sadhana is released on the basis of that foundation in the first stage. So that clarity and strength and commitment and intensity at the first stage must represent the essential available energy required to fulfill these later stages. People want to get into the later stages as quickly as possible, because they want to move on down the line. And they neglect the condition that must be realized in that first stage. They think sadhana is like Cub Scout training, but it is not. In fact there are people who have been in the Ashram since the day it formally existed who have not yet realized the maturity of the first stage of the way of Divine Communion.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: That wanting to realize your sadhana right now is a fundamental obstruction.

BUBBA: It is not even realization that is wanted right now. It is status, it is the "face" that they can save. People want extraordinary things, but certainly not realization! They do not even know what that is. They want it in name. They want all the effects, all the entertainments, all the holy man/holy woman games to play. They want to be made believers by effects. And they want to be known as having a certain kind of status. They want to have face in the Community. So all kinds of motivations appear and cause people to neglect the responsibilities of that first stage of sadhana that in itself is the foundation, that is most important, that is most difficult, and that can truly take a long time.

You have got to become a man, man or woman. You have got to throw it down every day! You have to bring me your energy, the very force of your life. You have to be doing it every moment. You can't lay back and be full of doubts, wondering about yourself, being negative, going through all of your bullshit numbers. That is not sadhana! Sadhana is coming to the point where you can lay it down every moment and be present with that open face, that open body, all of that energy, all of that life. It takes a while, certainly, to develop that in most people—they do play their games. Even though I can use their games to teach them for a period of time, after a reasonable period of time it is basically self-indulgence. At any rate, there is no reason why it should take so many years to fulfill this basic foundation sadhana.[24]

Realizing one's life and all conditions as conscious and true service to Bubba may sound like Divine Realization, but in fact it means that the devotee who has matured in the first stage simply is no longer overwhelmed by reactions to the conditions of life here. He is not about to buy his inclinations (which do arise!) to abandon those conditions or the Guru, the Teaching, and the Community. His service may seem to him

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

motivated, faulty, continually hampered by the tendencies that grip at him, but it *is* conscious and therefore true. The new devotee is very much aware in the midst of it that he is giving his life to the Guru through living the conditions, and no matter what upsets, difficulties, and phases appear, there is a steady momentum to his yielding. It is genuine, it is real. That service as the hour to hour movement of his life is the new devotee's realization of Satsang with the Guru.

WHATEVER YOU YIELD WILL BE REPLACED
(The Second Stage of Practice)

> *Sit with me, or in privacy, as a formal responsibility, once or twice a day. Remember me, surrender to me with love, yield your life and circumstances to God through me, and, at random, breathe the Presence of God, with attention to the Divine as the Reality or Real Person which is prior to or beyond the body, the mind, and the world. Breathe with your heart. With random exhalations surrender your self, your mind, your life, your desires, your body, and all the conditions of your existence from your heart to God through me. Then, with random and following inhalations, with your heart and your whole being, receive, draw upon, and become full of the Presence, Power, and Consciousness of God through me. Whatever you yield from the heart will, over time, be replaced by Divinely transformed conditions and/or by intuitions of the significance of any limitations you must bear in time and space.*[25]

As the first stage of the sadhana of Divine Communion matures and the evidence of devotional service to the Guru stabilizes in a devotee's life, he may be given the additional responsibilities that Bubba describes above. It is the same process of participating

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

in the sacrament of Prasad with the Guru, the same reception and release, only now the devotee perceives and becomes responsible for the process in a different, more esoteric arena of life and consciousness. This marks the beginning of the second stage of the way of Divine Communion.

This practice of the breath of God, described briefly above, should not, and in truth cannot, be undertaken by anyone on his own, or anyone who has not already realized in his life the necessary and prior foundation, the first stage of sadhana. When a devotee's life does truly become service to the Guru, he will spontaneously begin to enjoy Bubba as Divine Presence, and it will become very natural to him to breathe that Presence in the way Bubba describes above. There will be nothing mysterious about it. So the practice depends upon prior evidence in the individual, not his mere desire or curiosity. When someone has matured in the first stage of this sadhana, his life and his personal reports will very naturally begin to reflect that. He will then receive more explicit instructions from Bubba's disciples regarding the use of the breath in Divine Communion, both in and out of formal meditation, and relative to the spiritual Presence and Company of the Guru. So the practice is not to be engaged without the agreement of the Community, and it is given to a person formally by those in the Community who are responsible for the education of its members.

In this second stage, the individual assumes responsibilities relative to the support of the Ashram Community, increasing his financial contributions beyond the tithe and directing his time and energy to the support of Community services. As he matures in the second stage, he may also begin to demonstrate that he is fit for the sadhana of the way of Understanding. In that case he must assume that sadhana, while continuing the practices of the way of Divine Communion. It is not a matter of choice. If he is capable of the disciplines of the way of Understanding, then he is obliged to undertake them as a responsibility. A student in the way of Understanding must also, as a condition

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

of sadhana, become a member of the formal Community, yielding to the Community all the paraphernalia of private survival and taking on functions within the practical life of the Ashram.

In the second stage of practice, the form of sadhana remains the same—it is the surrendering of all of life to the Guru. But now the devotee's body, life-force, and mind are "turned also to Guru in God through the breath cycle." The devotee's relationship to the Guru becomes consciously spiritual, and he is invited to sit with Bubba in formal Satsang—meditation—and to engage this enjoyment of his Presence that coordinates the body, the life-force, and the mind with the breath.

There is one thing that you should notice about that practice. It is not a form of relationship to the sahasrar. It is not a yogic process specifically, although you will tend to manipulate it in that way, to make it a subjective game. It is a process to be engaged in my Company. It is a specific form of responsibility for your relationship to me. It depends upon a certain sense of my Presence here which exceeds this body. And it involves constant remembrance of me in that form. If you engage it as a yogic process directed toward a specific center such as the sahasrar, you will miss the mark! It is surrender to the Divine beyond comprehension. The Divine is that from which everything arises, of which everything is the modification, than which there is no other, which is Only. There is no center for That. Only when you have yielded entirely, when everything has been sacrificed, will you know that One perfectly.

So in the case of one who is engaged in that spiritual practice, there is reception of the Divine Presence without definition, to be and to do what it does and is. But you must yield, surrender the specific forms of your existence. You must first yield and surrender the circumstances of your existence, external and internal. Then you must surrender your body. Then you must surrender your life-force or your sense of energy. Then you must surrender the mind, or thinking, or thoughts. Then you must surrender

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

knowing or knowledge. And then you must surrender self. All of these forms of content, of distraction, must be yielded.

This process, as it is described in this case, has nothing specifically to do with the spine or the chakras. It is done from the heart or the great psychic region of your being, but it does not involve specific meditation on any centers in the descending or the ascending order of your body for any special purpose. It is simply reception and release, without all of those mechanics. You will see when you are instructed that it involves a certain depth, a certain opening, in which the whole psycho-physical mechanism must yield. But it does not involve the specific direction of these energies to the spine, the sahasrar, subtle centers, centers above the body, regions beyond the gross plane.

This does not mean that experiences related to all of these things will not arise. Clearly, they will, but the specific responsibility of this process is not directed toward any yogic technicality. As devotees mature in this way through this action that makes the old action obsolete, the grosser levels of obsession begin to weaken and attention falls into subtler tendencies. Thus, at first there is lots of life stuff, life circumstance, struggling even with leading a relatively orderly life. But later the gross ordinariness of your life begins to become orderly without great strain. And the content that arises becomes more subtle. You may very well, and, in general, you will have subtle experiences of a yogic kind. You may even pass out of the sense of this body at times into visionary states, moving into subtle perceptions and all of that.

Nevertheless, the process you are given is not a way of aligning your consciousness with those phenomena through various technicalities and structures that you learn about or perceive. The responsibility you are given is relative to the Divine. Whatever arises, you are to maintain this position of Communion, of devotion, and yield what arises, in general coincidence with the cycle of the breath, but there will even come times when the awareness of the breath disappears. When that happens, it is simply attending to my Presence, receiving me and yielding all this content.[26]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Prior to the second stage the devotee approaches the Guru during the formal occasions of Prasad and Darshan. But now he is invited also to sit in formal Satsang with Bubba during the times of meditation, along with other maturing Communion devotees and devotees in the way of Understanding. He continues to serve the Guru through the functions of his ordinary, human activities, but now he is also beginning to enjoy the yogic or spiritual dimension of the sacrament of Prasad.

The kind of intensification that usually occurs in a person's life at the beginning of this stage is a good indication of the humorous and paradoxical quality of this sadhana of Divine Communion. In a certain sense it can be seen or assumed to be a success, an attainment, to have matured to the point of being fit for the second stage of practice. Now you are instructed in "secret" practices, welcomed to sit formally with Bubba, ready to enter a whole new arena of experience. But from this point on, especially at the beginning of this stage, you are more likely to look like a misfit than a spiritual hero! Because at this point your sadhana is quickened, and sadhana is all about dissolution, loss of face, being undermined, not about success in some conventional spiritual way.

What happens? Quite likely, you will suddenly witness a terrific stirring up of the subjective content of your life, all kinds of emotions and impulses and notions that you may have thought you transcended long ago. In living terms, things may seem to get much worse instead of better! Why? Now that you have realized Satsang as the very Condition of your life, from which you know you cannot withdraw, the Guru responds with the intentional and intensifying communication of his Siddhi. And the influence of that Siddhi tends to be reflected not only as spiritual experiences, but also as a wide range of psychological, emotional, and psychic content of your life.

So life in Satsang may perhaps seem to become more difficult, rather than easier. That is fine—it is still only worthy of being sacrificed to the Guru.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DON'T FALL ASLEEP

Satsang involves a process in attention. It is not simply to sit in the Guru's presence, to relax mind and body, and to become subjectively involved in yielding to energies or states of inward absorption. Satsang requires attention and intelligence. It is a demand for these. Thus, when you accept the Guru's offer to spend time in his company, you must prepare yourself to spend time *in his Company*. This is true on all occasions of Satsang, whether in the Guru's physical presence, or in times of sitting at home, or on all occasions of ordinary participation in life. All occasions are in relationship. There is no real seclusion, no true isolation within. All occasions are a demand in relationship. Therefore, every moment is a demand for attention. And in every moment the argument of the Guru requires you to be intelligent, that is, to observe and yield your tendency to abandon attention, to assume a condition of separation and isolation in personal and subjective ways.

For this reason, formal Satsang, at home or in the Guru's physical presence, should be approached with energy, interest, and real attention.* You will, in that case, observe your turning away, your distractions, the present instances of the avoidance of relationship. Only in that case will you be able to return with attention to the Guru and, in time, via surrender from the heart, to the Condition which precedes your turning.

Thus, whenever it is at all possible, you should approach formal Satsang refreshed, awake, and free of obligations that might arbitrarily require you to engage in some other activity. The day is a cycle of obligations that produces phases in our available psycho-physical energy. Whenever it is at all possible, do not reserve

*Until the second stage of practice becomes your responsibility, you should use the private opportunity of approaching him at a place in your home or in the Ashram only for the brief and formal occasions of Prasad and Darshan. When the second stage of practice begins, you may also use such opportunities as the prolonged and special occasion of Satsang.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

time for formal Satsang at the end or downward phase of a cycle of life-energy. The immediate end of a work-day, for instance, is such a time of low energy. If formal Satsang is approached at that time, you will tend to show signs of weariness and distraction. In that case, you will spend your time fighting or yielding to sleep, since the psyche and body want to be refreshed. You will find it difficult to be present with attention, and very little of you will be available as intelligence. Thus, whenever it is at all possible, approach formal Satsang after a period of refreshment. In that case, you will present yourself to the Guru at the beginning or high point of a phase of psycho-physical energy.

It is best, therefore, to approach formal Satsang after a brief rest from activity. It may be good to take a shower or a meal before Satsang. (Since the life-energy tends to concentrate in the lower body immediately after a meal, it is best to time your sitting in Satsang 45 minutes to an hour after eating. If you have only taken a light snack, then perhaps 20 to 30 minutes is sufficient.) If you sit in Satsang on first arising in the morning, wash your face and sit in a ventilated place. Perhaps take a shower if you sit just before retiring at night.

It is not always possible to reserve formal Satsang to the most refreshed periods of the day, but, in general, you can refresh yourself briefly. And you can always be mindful of what Satsang itself requires, so that you will be better able to observe and be responsible for the tendencies that arise when the fluctuations of available energy obstruct attention and intelligence in Satsang.

Ultimately, Satsang is realized as a continuous occasion, under all conditions. At that time, all tendencies will become your responsibility at all times. But, as this process is growing as a responsibility in you, you should be very practical in your approach and see that you are properly prepared for the formal occasions of Satsang.

Particularly at the beginning, your approach to the Guru is through the conditions of study, money, food, sex, and service. Your life within the Community is a form that requires the attention and intelligence that is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

your proper response to the Guru. In time, formal Satsang becomes more and more the occasion of real meditation. In the beginning you should at least make it a conscious occasion in which you present yourself to the Guru refreshed and awake.

The more attention you yield to the Guru, the more your affection will keep you awake. Few tend to sleep in the presence of their loved-one, and one who loves does not rest until he is satisfied.

THE NAME OF GOD
(The Third Stage of Practice)

> *I look for this service, this loving sacrifice. Only then does the devotee touch my heart. Such a one is given everything freely, happily, and in the proper time.*[27]

There is yet a third stage of maturity in this way of Divine Communion. When the devotee begins to be aware of the Guru as a *constant* Presence, after a time of meditating in Bubba's Company, then the spiritual practice may be expanded to include the random and heartfelt repetition of the Name of God. In general, devotees are given this responsibility when the force of Bubba's Presence has begun to produce natural signs of inwardness, with eyes closed, and attention going up, when sitting with him in Satsang. By constantly recollecting their relationship to his Presence through the God-Name, the arising phenomena will cease to be distracting in themselves, but will be sacrificed to him. Through the practice of the God-Name, devotees maintain conscious relationship to the Guru's Presence, even as subtle or spiritual phenomena arise, and even if extreme upward attention yields forgetfulness of the body and the breath, upon which the second stage of practice depends.

> *"God" is the Name of God with which all men are familiar and to which they are naturally*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

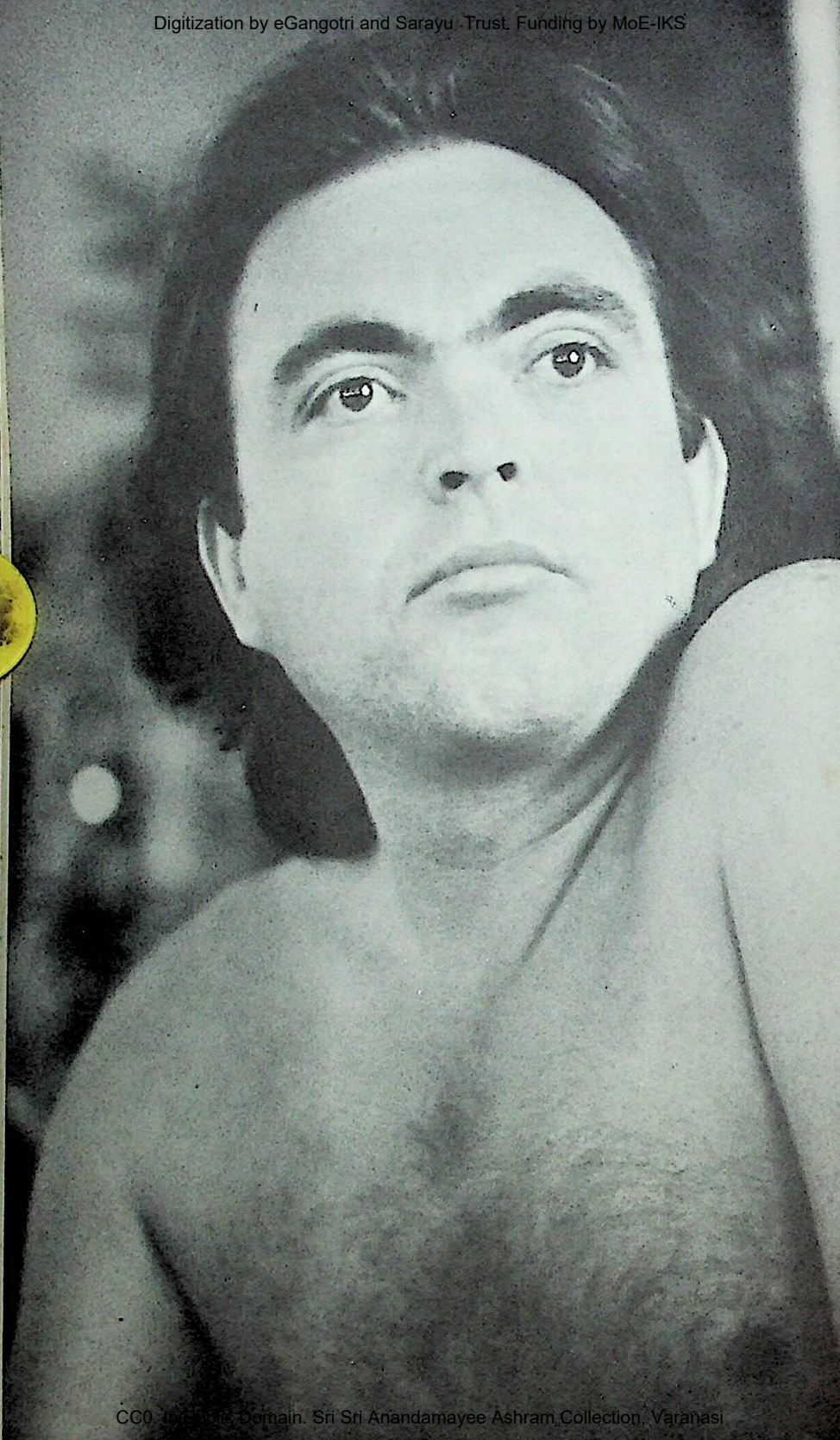
attached through body, breath, mind, spirit, and soul. Therefore, at random, with surrender in exhalation, inwardly or vocally, and with feeling and love in the heart, breathe the Name "God." Likewise, with random inhalations, feel and breathe the Divine Presence with the heart with the Name "God." This is the spiritual practice of the "God-Mantra" or "God-Name." (The coordination of this practice with the breath of course relaxes when there is forgetfulness of body and breath, but the sacrifice of all other content continues relative to the continued sense of the Guru-Presence. Also, when even the thinking mind comes to rest, the mental repetition of the Name may cease, but remembrance of the Guru as Presence and sacrifice to him continues.) [28]

As with all the conventional responsibilities of sadhana in the Ashram, the practice of the God-Mantra or God-Name is also given by the Community. It may not be practiced appropriately, nor is its practice acceptable to the Guru, until the evidence of maturity has appeared. Communion devotees who have been given the practice of the God-Mantra may enter the formal Community and participate in its full obligations. If real responsibilities require an individual to have a household outside the Community, he must at least support the Community through participating in its services, taking on practical service, and increasing his financial contributions.

Like the practice of the breath of God, the use of the God-Mantra may seem no different from traditional yogic or other meditative disciplines. In fact it is radically different, because it is engaged in Satsang, Divine Communion. There is a vast difference between repetitively and desperately fixing the mind on some Divine Name in hopes of attaining a glimpse of Divine Awakening, and randomly breathing the name of God to reinforce and refresh your already present and fundamentally constant awakening in the Divine.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

THE MEDITATION OF THE DEVOTEE
(The Fourth Stage of Practice)

In most cases it will take a considerable period of time for the devotee to mature fully in the second and third stages of the way of Divine Communion. Even in the quickening heat of the Guru's Presence, it requires time for a human being to move responsibly into the subtler dimensions of his existence, and still more time for him to come to sacrifice all this with great constancy to the prior Nature and Presence of the Guru.

But, assuming that you have been involved in these second and third stage practices in Bubba's Company long enough for them to have fundamentally matured, what kind of condition do you now stably enjoy? It is a condition already profoundly removed from the typical experience of the usual man. For one thing, the action of sacrifice and the transition of your attention to the finer dimensions of existence have left you completely unperturbed and undistracted by not only the arising phenomena of gross or worldly, earthly life, but also the phenomena of your usual mind and all its subtle objects of higher vision and superconsciousness.

But there is more to it even than this calm serenity. You have also been drawn into a completely different orientation toward the whole dimension of human life. Whereas previously you witnessed life from a point of view that seemed to be within your physical body and you more or less continually and automatically assumed that you were that body, now you are naturally and spontaneously concentrated in the brightness of consciousness prior to and, perhaps, felt to be above the body, mind, and world, enjoying constant meditation on the Guru's spiritual Presence. You maintain yourself in this sublime relational Presence through the spiritual disciplines (the spiritual exercise of breath and the God-Mantra). These are the sacrificial actions through which you become more and more absorbed in the Guru. Perhaps, depending upon your own karmic qualities or needs, you have also been given additional instruction relative to other secondary

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

esoteric responsibilities. But the Breath and Name of God are your simple delight in the Divine, constantly, maddeningly, with overwhelming intensity.

In the midst of all this you have also randomly, perhaps with some constancy, begun to enjoy intuitions of the perfect Intelligence or Consciousness of Very God, which is reflected as insight into the various forms of contraction or suffering that you are always creating in life and consciousness. Many devotees become so aligned to this natural process of intelligent reflection in itself that they take on the additional disciplines of inspection in the way of Understanding long before the third Communion stage matures. But some will not. And some never will.

Assuming for the moment that you are one of those who does not, what do you do at this point? You begin to demonstrate the readiness for, and are accordingly given by the Community, the practices of the fourth and last stage of the way of Divine Communion.

All four stages of the way of Divine Communion are forms of conscious, intentional, sacrificial contemplation of the Guru. They are all completely dependent on God, Guru, and Grace. The fourth stage is given only to those who do not go on to mature in the way of Understanding. It is given only on the evidence of the mature development of the three foundation stages. And, again, it is *given*. Even at this apparently sublime stage of spiritual life, you do not take on practices and responsibilities on your own, privately. The Community, in regular consultation with you, assesses your readiness for such disciplines and yields them to you on the basis of that consideration. So now you are introduced to and instructed in the practical matters and principles of this final stage as a specific form of action or attention to the Guru. This fourth stage combines the three previous stages and extends them to include formal responsibilities for the conscious regeneration of Amrita Nadi and the three forms of God-Realization. It is the "devotee's meditation."

There is a fourth stage of practice in the way of Divine Communion. It is given only to those who

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

mature in the third stage and do not go on to develop their sadhana in the way of Understanding. It is not specifically practiced even by disciples and devotees in the way of Understanding. It is the practice of the devotee's meditation described in Garbage and the Goddess *and it corresponds to the full devotee stage of the way of Divine Communion. When the first three stages of practice have matured to the point where 1) there is stable concentration above in the natural, spontaneous meditation of my Presence, 2) the arising objects of life, the gross objects, and mind, the subtle objects, fall easily in the sacrifice of meditation, and 3) the attentive consciousness has begun to feel me not so much as a presence over against the being or the life but as a radiance of consciousness without form, appearance or content, then this fourth stage of practice may begin.*

The fourth stage of devotional practice is absorptive or contemplative submission to my Form. It is simple, devotional rest in the sacrificial contemplation of my Form. It is the yogic or meditative expression of formal Darshan, just as the second and third stages of practice are the yogic or meditative expressions of formal Prasad. Thus, you see, the way of Divine Communion is the realization of conscious existence through the forms of Prasad, or mutual sacrifice, and Darshan, or the contemplation of the Divine Form. The actual practice involves the intuitive installation of first, my visible Form, second, my spiritual Form, and third, my perfect Form in the position of Amrita Nadi, between the heart and the crown of radiance that is both above and inclusive of the head.

When the devotee contemplates my physical Form standing in the Heart, he will feel that I rest or stand in the heart totally in all three of its centers (left, middle, and right—gross, subtle, and causal—and perhaps especially on the left). When he contemplates my spiritual Form, feeling me as Presence, he will sense that I rest or stand in the middle and right side of the heart, and perhaps especially in the middle. When he contemplates my perfect or Divine Form, which has no visibility, appearance, or content but is only intuited as

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the Very or Radiant Consciousness, which is also his own Consciousness or Condition, he will sense that I rest or stand in the right side of the heart.

The devotee is to realize these three forms of contemplation in this order, one at a time. Thus, he will come to enjoy perfect intuition of the Divine. As he contemplates me, he should surrender or sacrifice all that arises, with his heart, at my feet, which always stand in his heart. As he does so, his conscious being will rise up into the contemplation of my whole Form. He should especially surrender all that is self, mind, and body at my feet with his whole heart.

I am not in the physical place of the person, between his heart and his head, although that is the region through which he participates in this intuition of my Form, which is without location. Relative to the individual's intuition of me, that is where I stand, literally, relative to his own psycho-physical being. Thus, in this fourth stage of practice, that intuition is acknowledged, known, and it becomes the form of participation of the individual in my Company. His own consciousness is then focused in the perfect Form of Amrita Nadi, in the position of Amrita Nadi, and the force of intuition native to the dimension of being that is prior to forms and manifestation, but that also permeates and includes the manifest worlds, that Divine Communication is known in the position of Amrita Nadi. This contemplative absorption is not enjoyed by directing the attention to the various modes of appearance themselves, to the chakras, to the bodies, to the subtle realms, or to the subtle center in itself, above. It is only in that recognition of me, that intuitive recognition itself, in the place of Amrita Nadi, that the Divine Communication is known directly.

The contemplation of my perfect Form is the mature stage of this practice. Those who mature thus in relation to me will be given the grace of dissolution in the three forms of God-Realization even while they live. This fourth stage of practice is the fundamental form of both meditation and conscious existence in the case of mature devotees in the way of Divine Communion.[29]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

FROM THE BEGINNING TO FOREVER

In our discussion of the way of Understanding we will consider more fully the forms of God-Realization that Bubba mentions here, which are the domain of sadhana for the true and realized devotee. At this point we can abandon the technical considerations for a moment and consider what this fruition of sadhana amounts to. If you are drawn to this work and assume its forms and practices with intensity and devotion, you cannot help but come to enjoy this very realization. What is it? Perfect happiness. It is complete freedom from all the things that appear, all thoughts, images, desires, identities, events, realms, beings, everything that would seem to impinge upon the natural freedom of eternal and present Consciousness, all the forms of your own assumed suffering or limitation.

But this happiness, in very Truth, is not other than the very happiness that awakened in you the first moment you came into the Company of Bubba Free John and assumed this sacrificial relationship to him as Guru. It is absolutely the same. The only difference is that you have now encountered and surrendered all the possible objects in all the worlds that used to persuade you otherwise. Now it is unspeakably obvious that, from the beginning to forever, Satsang or Divine Communion is itself the Divine Reality, very Truth, realization of God, or the Only Reality.

To be depressed, to be self-conscious—it's just self-involvement, self-watching. But in any moment when you see and surrender it, it becomes a very simple matter. And you consciously fall into that Condition that is there just before you created all your troubles, before you began, in this moment, considering the fractions of everything and making yourself a something and God a something else and the world another something. Before you started imagining a program for your ultimate victory or defeat, by desiring and creating circumstances for yourself, just before all of that happens in this moment, just before you believe all of that, you are happy. *And it is better to be happy.*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

That happiness is your Condition. All the rest of it is an hallucination by which you program your life. So the matter of sadhana is simple. It is not complicated, it is not a complicated involvement with all of this stuff that obsesses you. Wherever that is seen and yielded, consciousness assumes its own natural, intuitive Condition. That is Satsang, that is Divine Communion. That is what all of this is all about.

In the devotee it is perfect. It is obvious in the devotee that there is happiness. That is his Nature, his Condition, his Destiny. Then everything that appears is Samadhi. The reason the devotee is called a devotee is because of the Bhava, *or Divine pleasure, that is stabilized in his case. He is not in every moment figuring it out, seeing the error and stepping beyond it through processes in consciousness. Whatever he sees is That. So he is only happy. He can't help but be happy. He can't sidestep it. He can't have an experience that is unhappy, fundamentally. It is all the same Condition. He can't find anything that is not that Condition, so he no longer participates in the reaction of ignorance. And all of his parts open. His heart opens. All sorrow leaves his being. His mind stops endlessly manufacturing his false vision, and it becomes radiance only. The world and his body and all forms become not a struggle toward some attainment, some immortality, some mortality, but fullness, blissfulness only. And all of that without benefit of a single vision! Well, all of that is also the enjoyment of the devotee who has just walked in the door. Satsang is that Samadhi.*[30]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

This chapter has been edited by Bubba from a talk he gave to The Dawn Horse Communion on June 28, 1975. It is one of his most precise and useful descriptions of the relationship between the devotee and the Guru.

The principle of sadhana is Divine Communion. Not life, not energies, not your psycho-physical form, not shaktis, not mystical experiences, but Communion. And all the forms of the sadhana of this work serve the activity by which sacrifice, surrender to God, reasserts its principal, responsible, and absolute position relative to everything that arises. Sitting with me in the Satsang Hall is an extension of the process by which that activity is served. To sit in Satsang with the Guru is to sit in the Guru's Company, to spend time in the Guru's Company. But, if you will notice, very little of the time you spend sitting in Satsang is spent in my Company. You waste your time in your own company!

A good part of what I have said and written is devoted to the criticism of what you are always doing. And you are doing it whether you are sitting in this Satsang Hall or playing ordinary games with one another. You do not cease to do it simply because you sit with me. In fact, you exercise it in very complex ways, and, usually, in very traditional ways, while you sit here. Quite naturally, because this is an Ashram, and because this hall is devoted to the ultimate affair of spiritual life, of real conscious life, simply because of all those traditional associations, you tend to become "meditative" when you come and sit with me in this hall, you tend to become involved with watching your subjective experience.

Usually, when you are active in the waking state, there are endless distractions. You are always moving. You are always gesturing, changing your physical position, changing the direction of your eyes, speaking, thinking, doing, receiving, communicating and receiving communications. You are very busy. But when you come into the Satsang Hall, nothing happens.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

I don't jump around and dance. I don't move very much at all. I don't generally wear fancy clothes or symbolic and fascinating costumes. I generally don't speak, and nobody else speaks. It is a plain room. Nobody taps you on the shoulder. No one is about to come and tell you to do something. Functional distractions are pretty much brought to an end when you enter the Satsang Hall.

Nevertheless, because of your profound commitment to distraction, when objective distractions are minimized, you naturally turn to subjective distractions. You automatically turn inward. When you sit, right away it seems to you that your mind is incredibly active. Your mind is the only thing left! By tendency you start thinking about your thinking and watching your thoughts and feeling your body. You want to move a lot, but you really can't. You want to have a conversation, you want to do something. As you start shuffling through all the feelings of the day, the mind usually focuses on the most disturbing and negative things that are in your psychological life at the moment, or, at times, on very good things that are arbitrarily elevating your mood at present. Or you may become aware of the energies that are generated in this Satsang Hall. Some types go for the "thinking about thinking" and watching their subjective content, and others go for the energies. I even think some of the latter type have never seen me in the Satsang Hall! By the time I come in, they are already swooning. They never open their eyes in my presence.

This criticism of what you are always doing is something I take seriously! What are you always doing? I do not believe for a moment that you are not doing it right now. *Right now.* And you are *really* doing it when you start meditating.

Meditation is Divine Communion. There is no meditation that I am the least bit interested in other than the meditation that I have described to you. That is Satsang with the Divine Person. Everything else is distraction with subjective objects. Such is not meditation. It is watching and following thoughts, energies, images, visions, feelings, all the modifications of life. None of that liberates you. None of that is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

sadhana, none of that is meditation, none of that becomes consciousness. Satsang, Divine Communion, has become secondary, secret, hidden underneath everything subjective and objective. Consciousness comes to the front when you begin to surrender all that to me. Then Consciousness in this moment is the nature of your presence here.

Therefore nothing is served by your becoming conventionally meditative around me. Nothing relative to real sadhana is served by your sitting with me unless you surrender to God through me. Prior to that time, nothing like real meditation is going on in you. At best, you will know only traditional or conventional forms of so-called meditation—subjective distraction, quieting, obsession, absorption in internal changes—the submission of Consciousness to modifications rather than the other way around. Real meditation involves the submission of all modifications to Consciousness.

This sadhana that I have described to you is not, in its origins, a mystical affair. It is practical. It is *absolutely* practical. On the basis of an intelligent response to the Teaching, the argument of the Guru, you enter into the Guru's company and into his Community. You go to live with the Guru, then, and he asks of you certain disciplines, which are the present form of your relationship to him. They are the *nature* of your sacrificial relationship to the Guru. They represent, test, and mature your initial understanding of the Teaching.

The practical conditions you have been given are not to be nominally applied at specific hours of the day. They represent an entire and constant life of action. These conditions are Satsang for you. It is by turning to the Guru *through* these conditions from hour to hour in the form of service to the Guru that one realizes this sadhana, that one enjoys this Satsang. This sadhana is real, practical, and functional. Every moment of such intentional sadhana serves your turning to God through me and becomes a life of true devotion and service through surrender and the remembrance of God from the heart.

At that point you may look something like a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

meditator, although you are not engaged in the usual subjective orientation of traditional meditation. Rather, you are present in the form of true devotion, which is Consciousness itself. Thus, real meditation is necessarily a very mature form of this very practical sadhana. And it is this practical sadhana that you are being asked to do, not conventional meditation, not consolation with subjective states. You are being asked to live this practical, functional life, which is intelligent and voluntary sacrifice to the Guru. Intentional application to the practical conditions, on the basis of an intelligent response to the Teaching, is itself remembrance of the Guru. It is Satsang. Such sadhana allows you to see your turning from God. You must make these conditions the form of your relationship to me.

Generally, though, you tend to regard these conditions as something too *worldly*, not spiritual enough. Everyone is very willing and often eager to abandon the conditions. Everybody wants to be free of the conditions. Everybody wants to indulge himself periodically, because discipline is difficult. The conditions *require* you to sit in place. They do not permit the kind of eccentricity that your obsessive life continually creates, even though they do not represent a gut-cutting asceticism, but only a natural and lawful ordering of life. Narcissus turns from what is natural and lawful. It is the *law* that Narcissus violates.

You must find ways in *every moment* to realize these conditions as a practical way of life, as Satsang, as this relationship and service to me. If you do that, these conditions will no longer be something to resist. They will become the grounds for this process that I have described. And your turning to me will absorb you more and more completely, until you live your entire life yielded to God through me.

If you truly consider these conditions, you will see that there is not a moment in your life to which they do not apply. But you tend to think of them in very nominal terms, and so you compartment the day into times when you fulfill these conditions and other times when you can sort of fake it. For instance, consider the condition of service. I hardly see any *service* in this

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Ashram at all. I see people waiting on tables from time to time, doing the practical things that look like helping others, but the *condition* of service is a total condition. It is a condition on your life. It is a condition that affects every moment in relationship to every being. It is a demand upon you every time you face another person or live with other beings. If you become conscious of this condition of service it transforms the quality of your action. It requires that every moment become a moment of service in which the option of self-concern is always undermined. If *service* is the principle of your relationship to all beings, including your intimates, you do not have three days to dramatize some event with someone. You do not have a week for anger. You do not have even five minutes, because service is your obligation. The demand for service, then, produces a kind of attention in this moment that makes you see your turning, your separativeness. It generates spontaneous self-observation.

Self-observation is that natural awakening in Consciousness that occurs when you devote your life to the Guru through practical conditions. Self-observation is not sitting down and looking at yourself subjectively. Self-observation is not a thing in *itself* that you do. Self-observation is the *natural* surrender from the heart that appears without your trying, without your concern, when your life is turned in each moment through these conditions to the Guru.

Study, or the continuous consideration of the Guru's argument, the fulfilling of the personal conditions, and the acceptance of the condition of service as a posture under all conditions is the nature of your sadhana. That is it! And your coming to me should be very direct, very practical, very straight. Do not come to oblige me to create some sort of subjective experience in you. Come to me on the basis of the Teaching, on the basis of your real sadhana.

Do not come to me to "meditate." Until this conscious, sacrificial life is awakened in you, all you will do is meditate in the traditional and conventional ways. Sitting in the Satsang Hall, then, becomes the ground for the *loss* of the thread of one's sadhana.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Whereas sitting here with me should be simple, natural attention and remembrance, and it is not that until life is moving, awake, really functional.

If this sacrificial life that I have described is awake in you and you are sitting in the form of the spiritual practices I have described, with a natural form of attention to me, yielding the various distractions inside and outside as they arise, then you may sit here as long as I am in the room. But if this conscious sacrifice is not alive in this way, and you should clearly know if it is not, if your tendency is to be "meditative" simply for the sake of meditation, if you are distracted, pulled away by the energies in the room, or distracted with what is going on in you, or fidgeting and adjusting your body the whole time, if you do not have any kind of real attention that permits you to *see* what is happening in you, then you should just come *briefly*. Take Prasad and leave, and let your sadhana be practical, functional in nature. I am not telling you to leave and not do sadhana. Do sadhana! But your sadhana should be practical, functional, ordinary in the truest sense, and not conventionally meditative. You should not indulge in yourself the kind of subjective consolations that have nothing whatever to do with Conscious life.

Any one of you, regardless of whether or not you turned to me this morning while sitting at home, may, on any given occasion, feel that you should just come to me briefly in formal Satsang, and then go about your business in some very practical way. If you know that you will be sitting the full time, and your reasons for doing so are genuine, then move toward the front of the room, where you will not be disturbed, where you will be able to stay the whole time. If you know that you are just going to be here briefly, then sit toward the rear of the room. Spend only a few minutes here, and then go and do practical sadhana, study, serve.

DEVOTEE: Should we do the same thing at home?

BUBBA: Absolutely. If, when you sit down in the Satsang Hall, the activity of true devotion (real attention, real surrender to the Guru in God) is not alive,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

then just bring your gifts, take Prasad, and spend a moment simply to enjoy this Company. But do all this very practically, very consciously. Don't sit down and start meditating, unless your meditation is real Communion with the Divine Person. Don't start thinking about everything in the world, don't start wandering about inside. Stay with me, and observe the turning that draws you away from me. If you have a ten-second span of attention, spend ten seconds here and leave.

DEVOTEE: That attention varies. Sometimes I feel very attentive towards you, and at other times my mind is very vague. Should I sit longer when I feel most attentive, when I am observing what arises?

BUBBA: This self-observation does not take place only when you are sitting here with me. It takes place under all kinds of circumstances. And it requires attention. If your attention is not free, you cannot observe what arises. You *become* what arises. Then you only exercise what arises and become involved in it. And if that kind of obsessive involvement is characteristic of your present state, then you should move yourself into practical, functional conditions instead of sitting in the Satsang Hall. You should not be sitting here vaguely, trying to generate attention. You should do something functional, because function always includes your attention. Function requires attention in ways that are easy to fulfill. Then you work with your hands or your body or your senses. You use your mind. So don't sit trying to battle what arises. Move into functional conditions with real attention, and then you may also, under such practical circumstances, observe the turning away, the distraction, the games. Therefore, living these practical conditions is real meditation, self-observation in the form of insight, or return to the natural condition of happiness. Such a way of living is also Satsang, because all these conditions are taken on willingly, as a response to the Guru and his Teaching. They are forms, then, of understanding, of acknowledgment of the Guru, of remembrance of the Guru, of sacrifice to the Guru.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Simply because the mind is running, though, does not mean that the affair of self-observation and sacrifice is impossible at that time. That is why you must test it in yourself. It is possible to observe, understand, and sacrifice a very active mind. Attention to me can appear even though there is very strong subjective activity. But that process requires free attention, free consciousness.

You must, through sitting with me briefly on regular occasions, see the value of what you are doing. And if it is at present just obsessive, conventional, self-meditative, you will know it. You will know to spend only a brief time in the Satsang Hall and otherwise to make your sadhana very practical.

Whatever the outward form, this sadhana must be conscious. And it is initiated in functional terms, in ordinary ways, under ordinary circumstances. Your first responsibility, then, realized and accepted in the Guru's presence, is this functional, ordinary life, described and maintained in the form of the practical conditions, all of which must be realized and lived as service to me. Through them I remind you of God. If you do not realize your sadhana in those terms, then your sitting with me will always be a kind of self-indulgence, consolation, inwardness, subjective distraction, self-watching. And as such it is irresponsible, not conscious. To indulge oneself in the Guru's company does not honor this Satsang. Therefore, staying here long or staying here short is your responsibility. But if you see me starting to bring my cane into the Satsang Hall, consider your decision carefully!

DEVOTEE: Are there any personal conditions relative to your mind, so that you can be responsible for your mental distractions, for what arises in the mind?

BUBBA: How can you do that?

DEVOTEE: I don't know. It's disturbing.

BUBBA: It is because you are sensitive to the fact that you are disturbed that you become willing to do

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

sadhana. Sadhana is not simply taking an aspirin for your disturbance, having a technique to make you feel better. Real sadhana is a process by which you become perfectly responsible, perfectly conscious. It is not a remedial activity. It is not a cure. "No Remedy," the title of the handbook for devotees, is itself a description of the whole affair of this sadhana.

Why should you want to quiet the mind? You are disturbed. There is this continuous sense of dilemma, of suffering. Therefore, there is always a subtle motivation to do something, to be distracted, to indulge oneself, to make the mind stop or to make it incredibly beautiful. All these motivations arise out of what fundamentally is always felt as dilemma. And it is only insight into that whole affair, not indulgence in all the possibilities of one's motivations, that permits consciousness to become the principle of one's existence. You must understand, but you need not stop the mind. The mind is one of the ways by which you picture this sense of dilemma. Then what if you were to stop the mind? You would still be the same guy. So stopping the mind has not served anything in that case.

It is better to be disturbed. It is *right* to be disturbed. In your condition, one *should be* disturbed! To regret being disturbed is like saying disease is wrong. Disease is perfectly appropriate, absolutely lawful. And so are all the functional difficulties that you experience. They are all timed to the second, and all are based on the nature and purpose of your relationship to things. Therefore, it is quite correct for you to be disturbed, because, in fact you are disturbed. To be disturbed and yet not to feel disturbed would not be appropriate. But that is how most people live. They are suffering only, and yet, if you watched television tonight, including the commercials, you would find it difficult to believe, from what they say, that people are *only* suffering. There is always some way out, some product or other, some international solution. It is much more intelligent to realize that you are disturbed. That is the beginning of sadhana. At least that sensitivity affords the possibility of sadhana. To become sympathetic, however, with all kinds of remedies to remove the symptoms of distur-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

bance is to commit oneself to the same game that already is one's suffering.

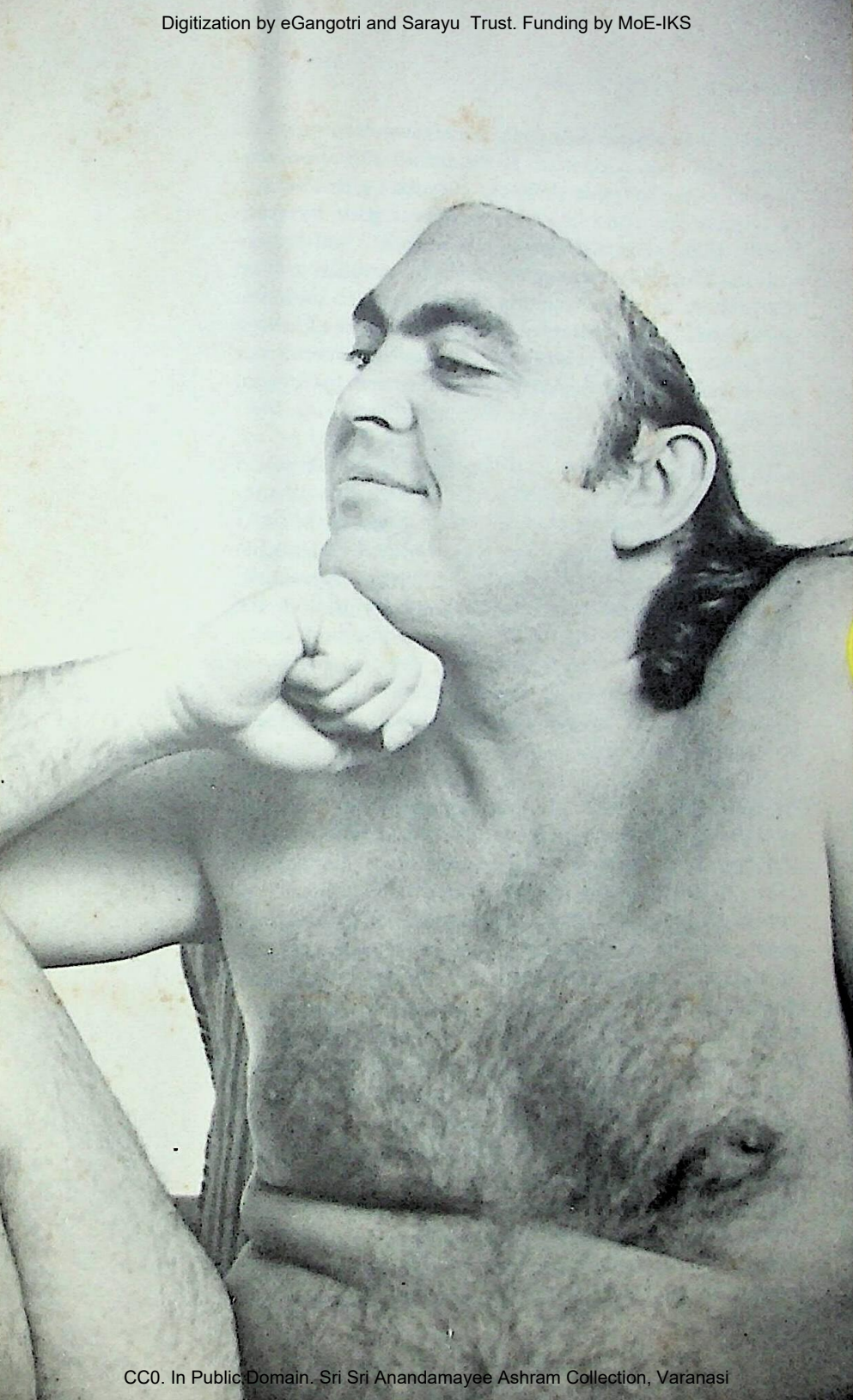
This dilemma that you feel constantly, and that seems to be arising in the mind, is not something that is happening to you. It is your own activity. That sense of dilemma is a result of one's fundamental activity. Thus, it is only insight, in other words, responsibility in consciousness for one's own event, that is the way of Truth. The way is not distractions, which are the way created in reaction to your suffering. That way is irresponsible, the traditional and conventional way. That is the childish way of man. The spiritual traditions are filled with all kinds of solutions that men have created in reaction to their fundamental suffering.

It is a better discipline to realize suffering in consciousness, to know it fully, to see its origin, to see its creation in every second, to see that it is not only that you are disturbed, but you are disturbing everybody else. If you just quieted your mind, you would not be sensitive any longer to the fact that you are disturbing everybody else. It is one's suffering that is the material of one's sadhana. It is suffering that is continually brought to the surface, and yielded to the Guru in God. In this process, real Consciousness comes to the front and becomes responsible again, whereas now it is hidden, irresponsible, subject to the way of modifications only, subject to distraction.

Certainly, it is possible to be distracted by experiences here, in this Satsang Hall, in this Ashram. The year 1974 was devoted to the lessons of experience in this Ashram. I have spent much of the time following that concentrated period trying to improve your understanding of those same lessons. All kinds of experiences, high and low, were created during this whole time. In the beginning, people had extraordinary experiences here every day. It was a time of wild mysticism. But nothing changed, fundamentally. Those experiences did not themselves serve the conscious life, but only gave more glamour to the way of Narcissus. That time in the Ashram must forever serve as a lesson and an argument for the radical way of this Satsang. And since that lesson has now been fundamentally communicated,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

you must be responsible for your approach to me. You must see if your approach is the traditional approach. You must see how you do not come with a gift, but with a request for consolation, not self-sacrifice but self-meditation, self-distraction, demands, self-presentation. Therefore, you must always approach me on the basis of the Teaching, grateful for sadhana. Make gratitude the mood of your coming here. Then go about the responsible affair of your sadhana from hour to hour, instead of this hallucination that is traditional spirituality.

DEVOTEE: I've always had the sense of obligation to serve people in some way that will affect their sadhana, you know, help them along in the spiritual path. But I feel totally incapable of doing that, so I feel that on the other hand I should try to serve them in more practical terms, in the same way that I would try to live the conditions in practical terms. But I don't find many practical opportunities for serving people. So I am confronted by people in the household all the time. There ought to be a way to bring my life energy to them in a form of service.

BUBBA: Right. All these conditions are there to produce this kind of reflection in you, this awareness of the nature of your game. The conditions themselves, taken outside of the whole context of the spiritual community and of Satsang, seem to be the grounds for some sort of utopian life. But, truly, they are instruments of the spiritual process. They will show you your limitations and serve this crisis in you, produce the reflection of failure in you. You will experience many phases relative to fulfilling these conditions. Perhaps the strategy of always looking to find some practical way of serving others, then, is false. Serving others should certainly be as practical as possible, but it also involves a different orientation to others. Service *is* an orientation to others. It is not an orientation to oneself in the presence of others. And to have some sort of ulterior motive, then, is self-meditation. The obligation of service shows you how your presence with others is a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

form of self-meditation. It is not that when you are present with others you must always be doing something, you know, like trimming their toenails! Just be present in a natural way.

When irresponsible people spend a lot of time here sitting with me, either they close their eyes and get very inward, distracted from me in some way, or they get stiff as a board and their eyes sort of bug out and they refuse to turn away from me. In both cases they are spending their whole time obsessed with themselves, with their own content, whereas they are just supposed to be here with me, with attention, not fixation but natural attention, at ease, happy, sensitive to the Guru-Nature, which is their own Nature and Condition. Anything else is a technique for being "present" or "absent," a ritual of attention to me or else some subjectivity, wherein really what you want to do is think about yourself, feel yourself. There may also be some motive to release oneself from that strategy. But even that motive is self-motive.

The demand for service, because it is a demand for natural attention in the company of others, functional presence in their company, is a continuous criticism of what you are tending to do in every moment in relationship. Service is an orientation toward relationship, rather than an orientation toward subjectivity. It is in itself a simple condition, but it is a demand, and in every moment, its reflection in you is different. There may be times when you are frustrated by the condition of service, when you are very awkward in fulfilling it, or when you are super-active, super-inactive, even apparently successful. It is a test in every moment. It is a demand for relationship.

All the conditions are there to serve the alignment of your life with the Law of sacrifice. The conditions are not ways of exploiting your potential for intellectual life, your solid strategies. They are demands in the vital. They demand participation in life. Therefore, only when the practical aspect of this Satsang has become intelligence, sacrifice, and real meditation does the relationship to the Guru become consciously profound, as it is in the case of a true devotee. The true devotee

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

spends a lot of time in the Guru's company, because the devotee's whole life is an extension of this devotion to God.

DEVOTEE: Is it appropriate for us to have your picture on our shrine in our Satsang Hall at home?

BUBBA: The place you have at home is simply the extension of this Satsang Hall, the extension of these occasions of Prasad, Darshan, and formal Satsang in my physical presence. You should use that place at home exactly the way you use this one when I am here. It is perfectly natural, then, to have a photograph there. On the other hand, there are cultic ways and there are appropriate ways to use that place, as described in *No Remedy*. In the beginning, just as you do not spend a lot of time sitting irresponsibly with me here, but you bring gifts, take Prasad, and spend a few moments, you should do the same there.

If you anticipate spending an appreciable length of time sitting with me, you should at least be able to sit here with natural attention, breathing the Presence of God and turning to me. You should simply be here with me, able to surrender as it arises any distraction that disturbs that simple, natural attention. If you have that much reserve attention in you, then you can sit with me the whole time, until I get up to leave. It is not that you are given permission to do it. It is appropriate to do it. It is a natural expression of your sadhana. But if that kind of responsibility is not readily present in you, then this moment's sadhana should be more practical. Then go and do this practical sadhana, live this Satsang in the functional form of the life-conditions.

Sometimes, just the condition of sitting here with me, without all the usual distractions that can occupy you in an ordinary moment, makes you feel dopey. That is another way of becoming subjective. Having no distractions makes you go to sleep. Some people get involved in thinking, or feeling, or experiencing energies, and some fall asleep. These are all strategies, ways of reacting to the simple condition of coming here and sitting with me. Quite naturally, these strategies

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

will always arise until you have realized your life as service to me. Then, spending more time with me in formal Satsang will be real. You will be really present. You will spend your time with *me*. You will observe these distractions and surrender them, and you will breathe my Presence. You won't react with some subjective game, some traditional or conventional strategy, some remedy. Subjective obsession is just a way of replacing the world with your own inwardness. When the world ceases to distract you, a radical process of distraction replaces it. When outward attention fails and you go to sleep, then dreams appear, or unconsciousness, which is another form of conventional distraction.

There is in fact no unconsciousnsss, not a moment of it. There is only Consciousness or the Divine Reality. But Consciousness is not the realized principle of our conventional presence, and we are naturally distracted by the modifications that arise. We assume the quality of these modifications to be our Condition. We forget that we are only Conscious. So we are asleep. Unconsciousness is a form of belief. It is a way of forgetting one's real Condition. However, it is not that when you understand, when you become truly awake, you will never show any of the ordinary signs of a sleeper. It is just that your life will cease to amount to ignorance, to unconsciousness, to an argument for your dilemma and your search.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Suggested Readings:

Garbage and the Goddess:

pages 173-202.
page 208 (I have said. . .) to page 230.
pages 330-349 (. . .in the life vehicles).

The Knee of Listening:

pages 39-54 (. . .I had never known before).
page 196 (The ultimate and simplest meditation . . .) to page 197 (. . .is real life).
page 199 (Understanding is always beholding Bhagavan. . .) to page 200 (. . .unqualified adventure).
page 217 (Self-indulgence. . .) to page 218 (. . .powers of suffering).

The Method of the Siddhas:

pages 49-92.
pages 320-344.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

3

THE COMPLICATIONS OF SADHANA: THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

There is nothing serious about the way of Understanding at all. I have never treated it seriously, you know. It is just what it is. So if you can't cut it, who cares? I will give it to you anyway. I don't care what your plans are. I am going to get you anyway. I just had to keep you there with me face to face with the right attitude for as long a time as necessary. You know what I mean? I am tired of seeing all this coming and going. If I have to get a little looser to hold onto them for a little longer, I'll do it. I'll be Pope if it will save all living beings.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

THE PATH OF ONLY GOD

I don't believe I have much more to say, except that there is only God. Now, let me elaborate on that for a moment. There is something you have to understand about this kind of statement. It sounds like a conventional statement. It sounds like one of those happy asshole statements that ridiculous mystics make from time to time.

DEVOTEE: What statement, Bubba?

BUBBA: That there is only God. Only *God. Now many people say that there is God, and when they say there is* only *God, they mean there* is *God. The statement that there is only God is actually a radical statement, because it implies that there is nothing that is not God. Nothing! No process, no appearance, no manifestation, not even this one, not even this homely, little, devilish involvement of all of us, that is not God. How wonderful that even we poor bastards should suffer such enjoyment.*

Now there are reasons within the physics of all the worlds why all of us, so-called, have appeared here in this time and place, not knowing anything about it. I mean, just consider it for a moment. We have the sky and earth and trees and edible things and lesser creatures who don't think or talk. And we gather with one another and we carry out great plans and we amuse one another with activities and arts and all kinds of delicious things, pleasures that we can create for one another bodily and so forth. But in the midst of all of these distractions that we try to generate every single moment, as often as we can, basically no one knows what this is. No one! No one knows what it is! And on the basis of the dilemma that this mystery reflects, we carry on our lives in conventional terms. Within the field of conventions we have all the religions and spiritual techniques and spiritual teachers and spiritual

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

paths, all the ways that human beings and those greater than human beings by experience have created. All of them are the same thing. All of them belong to the conventional order of life.

Literally there is only God. There is only one Condition, only one *Condition, not many conditions, not a condition of which this is the manifestation. There is* one *Condition, absolutely only one. How can I say it? There is—let me put it this way—there is* one *Condition. There is absolutely only one Condition, and that is not other than your own Consciousness.*[1]

We have already outlined in *No Remedy* the foundation way by which Bubba asks his devotees to approach him, the way of Divine Communion. We have seen that it is a way of action, of constant yielding, surrender, and sacrifice to the Divine, which is already present in one's life in the form of the Guru himself. And we have seen that, by holding to the various practices Bubba offers in this way, a devotee may come to full and inclusive and perfect God-Realization within this life. The way of Divine Communion is a perfect expression of the graceful gospel of all the Siddhas: Live with me, surrender to me, and I will show you God to the point of your own perfect Realization.

Within the way of Divine Communion, a devotee may also begin to enjoy another, very specific development of sadhana: the way of Understanding. This is the unique expression of the Siddhas' way, the way of Divine Communion, that Bubba came expressly to communicate to those who were capable of receiving it. It was his principal concern, for the first five years of his Teaching work, to communicate this radical expression of the Divine Process. Only when it had become established in the lives of a small group of his disciples did he then feel free to allow people to approach him specifically in the way of Divine Communion, which is the ancient offering of all Siddhas. He wrote in his letter announcing the way of Divine Communion:

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

For more than five years I have been at work with individuals in intimate company to communicate, demonstrate, and awaken in them the sadhana of the way of Understanding, which is described in all of the previous literature of my Teaching work. This way is the special form of instruction which was implied in my own birth and sadhana. Only recently have I found, in the case of a small group, the evidence of maturity which is the necessary foundation for the realization of this way. I have given this group of disciples all essential responsibility for the future management and general instruction of my Ashram. I have completely put into writing all of the necessary instructions relative to the final and technical realization of this way of Understanding. Therefore, except for the actual instruction of mature disciples and devotees, my special Teaching work is, in its essentials, complete. My special Teaching work has been a service for a few. The way of Understanding is not itself a saving gospel that can affect the world at large. It is a way for the special few who were given to me in the spiritual planes above this world before my present birth. Those few were with me then, and, because their karmas obliged them to be born on earth again, I have taken the present birth to continue my work with them. The way of Understanding has thus been established as a path on earth, and it will remain here, through the responsible services of my devotees, for all future individuals who have attained the spiritual status above this world of those whom I have presently been born to serve. Apart from such individuals, for whom the karmas of the lower planes are weak, there are relatively few who, even by virtue of sheer sympathy and persistence, will be able to adapt to this difficult way. It requires an intelligence that constantly exceeds the power of life's theatre, and an attachment to the spiritual intimacies and disciplines of my Company that cannot be attained by mere effort or conventional inclination.

But I am willing to serve all beings in this place. My special work has been for a few, but I am an incarnation of the Divine Form, and my special work, now fulfilled, can stand by itself in my Presence. I have

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

become willing to assume a more general role for the sake of the spiritual life or salvation of men.

All who come to me may participate in the eternal Grace of God. It is not necessary for every one to belong to the special class of individuals whom it is my unique obligation to serve in the way of Understanding. For those few, sadhana in my Company is like the resumption of a course of study after a period of recess. Such individuals are already used to my discipline, my wildness, and the special character of my appearance and play. But others cannot identify me in this manner, and they are sensitive and available only to the most direct expression of the universal and unqualified Divine in me. For these many, who are only now becoming available to sadhana or life in Communion with the Divine Person, I am willing to do service in another way, which is the simple way of loving submission and attention to God.[2]

If you examine the teachings and paths offered by the Siddhas of the past, you will see that, in many ways, the way of Divine Communion duplicates their essential features. The Siddha lives with his devotees, and he gives them disciplines, both life-conditions and spiritual practices, by which they may maintain themselves consciously in his Divine Company. That is what all the Siddhas have always done, and that is the form of life we find Bubba offering in the way of Divine Communion.

What has always happened, however, some time after the death of the Siddha himself, is that the generations of his devotees have lost the thread of that Divine Communion he truly offered. They have become common seekers again, instead of devotees already living with God. And slowly but inexorably the Siddha's communications have become part of the apparatus of the great search of mankind. The practices in life, breath, and mind, originally offered as natural, functional ways of staying with the Guru in God, become ways by which men proceed to *seek* him in God. And so the radical work of the Siddhas has always been eventually lost, distorted, and absorbed by the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

conventional and ignorant ways of the traditions of man.

The way of Understanding is the first communication by a true Siddha that is not inherently and overwhelmingly vulnerable to such distortion. If it were only a verbal communication, some form of philosophy, an abstract system, then certainly over time men could, with the best of intentions, find innumberable ways to undermine and make it obsolete as a way of Truth. But it is not merely a verbal communication. Bubba has established it sufficiently in the very lives of his disciples in this path so that he is now confident that "it will remain here, through the responsible services of my devotees." So the radical quality of this communication, its perfect expression of the Divine work as a process in Consciousness and Truth from the beginning, is guaranteed through the continual maturing of true devotees in this Understanding.

The way of Understanding is peculiar to the life and Teachings of Bubba Free John. It is the essential form and expression of his appearance in this time and place, and it cannot be aligned or compared to any existing or ancient paths communicated in this world. The way of Understanding is a radical expression of the Divine Process communicated and realized among men via the perfect Presence of all the Siddhas. It transcends and includes the realizations of all teachings in the great traditions of esoteric spirituality without any resort whatsoever to the ways of seeking. It is the living path of the very Heart, real Consciousness, and it is uncompromising. To one who would undertake the way of Understanding, Bubba makes an absolute and immediate demand. The way of Understanding requires, immediately and forever, everything a man can surrender. To be done properly, with intelligence, this radical way demands of him a certain predisposition to understanding itself, which is prior to all conventional forms of spiritual consciousness and action, even the kinds of discriminative wisdom found in the classic traditions. But it is not a heavy, negative discipline. Real understanding is Satsang or Divine Communion

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

absolutely realized, Grace received—it is an utterly joyous, humorous, vibrant practice. Nor is the way of Understanding a secret path. All are encouraged to approach Bubba through the free and delightful paradoxes of its disciplines; this way is available to all. Only, because of what it demands in life and consciousness, most men are not available to it.

Perhaps the most telling thing we can say about the radical quality of the way of Understanding is that, from the very beginning, it duplicates or maintains the Form of Reality, Amrita Nadi, the natural, true, and transcendent structure and process that is conscious Existence, God as the Total Conscious World. Put in the most direct and simple terms, this way involves the gradual intensification of consciousness and responsibility in relationship, to the point of perfect dissolution in the God-Existence. Just what that entails will become clear, hopefully, as we outline the basic dynamics of this path.

The way of Understanding is perfect. It is sublime, magnificent, an unspeakably brilliant gem of a way of life and consciousness. But, from the beginning and at last, it does not involve anything more or less than the way of Divine Communion. That is its foundation and eternal mainstay. It is simply the primarily conscious, rather than primarily active, enjoyment of that very Condition of Satsang. It too depends utterly on God, Guru, and Grace. Because of our conventional associations with the word "understanding," we naturally think it has something to do particularly with mental comprehension, intellectual appreciation of spiritual life. This notion is not true. Real understanding involves the whole life. It is profound absorption in Divine Communion and dissolution of all one's conventional functions—body, emotions, mind, energy, superconsciousness, identity itself—in very God. Understanding is the eternal enjoyment of all the Siddhas in God, and now, through the grace of God and the agency of Bubba Free John, it has become available in its perfect essence to all men and women who have the capacity to enjoy it.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The nature of all manifest existence, simply indicated, is *Consciousness in sacrificial relationship.* In the way of Divine Communion that true Consciousness abides as the Guru, and the devotee sacrifices all that he has and is to that Consciousness and receives it as Grace, to the point of perfect submission and absorption in that Consciousness.

But in the way of Understanding, as soon as one begins it, that same Consciousness is also made the very and active principle of your own sadhana. The principle of sadhana, then, remains sacrifice. You maintain and continue to engage the activity of reception and release and to enjoy the Prasad of the Guru's Presence. But more and more the activity of sacrificial action relative to all the forms of limitation you represent is replaced by motiveless inspection of all that arises and intuitive identification with Consciousness itself. That inspection, that discriminative insight, is not merely a matter of noticing things about yourself, of watching events as a mind. It is an intense fire and demands instantaneous responsibility for what arises. It is the true action of the Heart itself, very Consciousness, in which what is seen is immediately, already sacrificed. You must thereafter, once understanding has appeared relative to some arising condition, maintain responsible freedom from the compulsive binding quality of that particular form of your activity. So understanding involves intense heat, tremendous discipline and energy. That is why not many of us are fit for this path, at least not when we first come to the Guru.

Discriminative insight in some sense is part of everyone's sadhana. But as an elaborately developed possibility, it only appears fundamentally in the way of Understanding. The way of Divine Communion, the way of submission, of surrender, of dependence on Grace, of participation in the eternal process that is Grace, of absorption in the Divine, that way is the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

fundamental form of approach. The way of Understanding develops on the foundation of Divine Communion. Those who mature in the special way that makes the way of Understanding appropriate for them develop this life in Grace in a special form, via the process of critical and intuitive insight.

Suffering is your own action. It is the action of contraction, of self-definition, of obsession with what arises in itself, independent of its ground, its substance, or its true condition or status. That is what suffering is and that is what ignorance is. Suffering and ignorance produce the usual life, from the usual comprehension or failure, as karma, as illusion, as suffering, as negative destiny, as unconsciousness. The way of Divine Communion involves a specific responsibility relative to that action that is your suffering. That way involves a life of counter-action, of other action. Whatever is not used becomes obsolete. This is the principle of the way of Divine Communion: a devotional life that is realized in practical terms and that involves a form of action different from the action that is suffering, ignorance, turning from God or from the condition of Truth, Reality.

The way of Understanding appears within this way, but it is a development of the process of critical and intuitive insight. And in that process this false action is comprehended, seen, inspected under all kinds of circumstances—gross, subtle, and causal—to the point of responsibility or no-limitation. In inspection, in understanding, that action is obviated and undone.

In the way of Understanding, the specific responsibility of discriminative intelligence begins to appear and develop in you, and that development is served by the Ashram. In that way many technical responsibilities are given at different stages of sadhana. These technical responsibilities serve the inspection of specific forms of events, specific dimensions of consciousness or experience. But that inspection is for the sake of the same affair that is served in the way of Divine Communion, which is simply to see or to intuit That from which all of this is arising. When that insight, that enjoyment, appears, then the life of the devotee in

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the way of Understanding begins. And the devotee in the way of Understanding also moves through the three stages of God-Realization. Both these paths in my Company are ultimately forms of participation in the same process and in the same realization.[3]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

THE STUDENT AND THE TEACHING

There are three stages in the way of Understanding: the student, the disciple, and the devotee. As we mentioned earlier, devotees in the way of Divine Communion generally do not even consider the possibility of taking on the disciplines of understanding until they have begun to mature in the second stage of Divine Communion practice. Nor will the Community begin to assess their fitness for the way of Understanding until that time.

What qualities would the person inclined to the way of Understanding demonstrate? Fundamentally, that simple disposition to inspection—to seeing the qualities of his contracting activity with such intensity that the very noticing implies responsibility to him and reveals its force in his life and consciousness on that basis. If you are such a person, it will simply become obvious that you must take on the way of Understanding. It will not be a matter of choice, but of necessity. Though you enjoy the life of devotional service and sacrifice to Bubba, like everyone else, you will find increasingly that you have a burning need to dissolve your suffering in understanding, consciousness itself. Your yielding must be implicit in the very noticing of it. That noticing, in Truth, involves instantaneous release of the strategies of limitation that you are chronically engaging, and instantaneous reception of the Guru Presence as your own Condition, and his Conscious Nature as your own Conscious Nature.

The following section was prepared from Bubba's writings on the student stage of the way of Understanding and its various stages and responsibilities in consciousness.

Understanding arises as spontaneous self-observation and insight in the midst of the confrontation with the Teaching. That confrontation must not merely be in the form of an intellectual and sympathetic meeting with the written or verbal Teaching. It

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

must involve the whole of your functional life, a confrontation with the Teaching as Demand, as Community, as conditions of life. In that case, the confrontation is reflected to you and in you in the form of symptoms. These symptoms include all of the difficult and unpleasant signs of resistance and contraction that can appear in terms of the psycho-physical being. Enduring these symptoms while continuing 1) to study, 2) to maintain the personal conditions relative to money, food, and sex (i.e., non-dramatization of awakening desires, preferences, and motivations), and 3) to live a life of service makes *insight*, the conscious event, the only possibility, *rather than life-dramatization* via the unconsciousness of vital shock.

This functional sadhana in the face of awakened symptoms yields a gradual revelation of 1) your particular strategies under various conditions, and 2) your characteristic strategy under conditions in general. As these become clear, and while, via maintenance of the student conditions, you do not resort to the inclinations awakened symptomatically, you will 3) tend to fall in on that sense of yourself that underlies and motivates your characteristic strategy of life.

Thus, the Satsang of functional confrontation with the Teaching (as instruction and demand) becomes a more and more subtle revelation of the game of Narcissus in your own case. At first you will see yourself tending to act in various separative or self-meditative ways under all kinds of conditions. Thus, for instance, you will see withdrawal from intimates when conflicts arise, or reluctance in the face of functional tasks, etc. You will see laziness, desires for self-indulgence, moods of negativity and depression, and all the rest. This is the beginning of insight. This process of self-observation in the midst of awakened symptoms matures in time to the point where you will begin to observe a characteristic strategy, a kind of "face" or unique "role" you tend to enact or present to life under almost all circumstances. Thus, you may see yourself being characteristically ironic, giddy, superficial, blunt, aggressive, fawning, intellectual, and so on. The revelation of this characteristic strategy is the second level of this insight or

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

understanding. When you have become thus sensitive, while yet not generally yielding to that private drama (because you are maintaining the student conditions), you will tend next to fall in on that self-image or self sense that is responsible for your characteristic and random strategies of life in relationship. Thus, one who is characteristically aggressive and tough may discover that in fact all of that is a cover for a constant sense of vulnerability and weakness. One who is characteristically ironic and intellectual may discover this is a cover for a chronically angry, hostile, and obsessive self sense. All characteristic external strategies are compensations for a more inward self-image that is quite different. All external strategies are armor or protection to prevent the exposure and dramatization of the negative self-image hidden within. Therefore, this falling in on the inner self-image, the inward game that is Narcissus, is the third stage in the revelation of insight.

The next or fourth level of this spontaneous insight or understanding is comprehension of the total strategic game of your conventional life. In that case the random and characteristic external or dramatized strategies (including both the descending or life-oriented games and the ascending or so-called spiritualizing games) as well as the internal or protected self-image and subjective game are seen as a whole, as a single effort in dilemma. When one's symptomatic suffering is endured under the appropriate conditions of this sadhana of Satsang, the heat generated thereby becomes penetrating insight. It is then that one's suffering, seeking, and dilemma are known to be one's own activity. It is then that the whole of one's life is seen to be the activity and theatre of Narcissus: the complex avoidance of relationship.

When sensitivity to one's own activity has matured to this degree of insight, then that insight becomes the operating principle of one's sadhana. When this degree of sensitivity is enjoyed, then a new force of consciousness is released which is senior to the mechanics of life and mind. It is the beginning of the life of the Heart, of real consciousness. In that case, the student's

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

meditation becomes enquiry in the form: "Avoiding relationship?" This is the initiation of conscious responsibility or true functional intelligence. The life of enquiry becomes more and more inclusive, penetrating, and conclusive. The relational force of life is regenerated, and the intuitive foundation that is consciousness itself becomes a more and more profound realization. When life and consciousness mature and stabilize in this fashion, the student passes into the disciple phase, wherein the relationship to the Guru as Siddha and Siddhi is known in Truth.

Just as the student phase is one of confrontation with the Teacher and the Teaching to the point of insight and responsibility, the disciple phase is one of confrontation with the Siddha and the Siddhi to the point of intuitive Self-realization. Through the agency of the Guru-Siddhi, the disciple passes through the events of re-cognition (knowing of all that arises as contraction of the manifest force of life and consciousness) to the point of radical intuition (knowing of the Principle of Consciousness, or Consciousness-Light, of which all that arises is seen to be only modification, not other than the Divine).

The mature disciple is responsible and fit for the life of a devotee. The devotee enjoys intuitive realization of his own Nature and Condition as well as that of the Guru, God, and the world. He realizes intuitive knowledge of the Divine Person, the identification of the Divine Person and the World as a whole, and engages in a life of Wisdom and Service in the form of the World-Process, which is spontaneous and eternal conductivity of the Divine Light as Life or Fullness in the always already realized intuition of the Heart, Real-God, or Absolute Conscious Reality.

Each stage involves study, conditions or disciplines, and spontaneous or unmotivated observation of the processes that were studied. The conditions, lived in Satsang, generate the symptoms which serve the crisis of knowledge. Study is not the knowing and in itself adds nothing. It is simply an appropriate act, an intelligent obligation, a responsible service to the Guru, the Teaching, and the Community.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The sadhana of assuming conditions in Satsang, which awakens a crisis of self-observation and understanding, is the way of the knowing. Thus, what is studied is later revealed or proven in sadhana.

The practical sadhana of the student is study and the discipline of function and relationship. He studies, responds to the Teaching, resorts to the Guru as Teacher (source of the Teaching), acknowledges him, asks for his discipline, and submits to him in the form of that discipline. In this submission he conforms to the discipline as given through the Guru's chosen instrument, the Community.

Acknowledgment of the Guru and submission to him in the form of the discipline are the characteristic forms of the student's relationship to the Guru. The discipline of life-functions is received in the form of the "conditions" of money, food, and sex. The discipline of relationship is received in the form of the demand for service. And these two are continually reestablished in Truth and understanding in the form of study, the discipline of intelligence.

This way does not exploit the search. The principal condition of sadhana is Satsang, the relationship of acknowledgment and submission to the Guru as Teacher. The sadhana is not itself fulfillment of any of the disciplines as an outward prescription, but it is understanding, and thus realizing Satsang with more and more intensity under the conditions of the discipline. Sadhana is not the conditions or disciplines themselves, but the conscious process lived in the midst of them.

The way of Understanding is no-seeking, no-dilemma. But the sadhana or real practice is not itself a strategic exercise of the concept of no-seeking and no-dilemma. The student cannot by mere reading, changes of mind, and acts of will perform an action that is no-seeking, no-dilemma. *He is a seeker in dilemma* except in the case of radical understanding. Thus, his sadhana is not to do deliberate action that is no-seeking and no-dilemma, but to turn to the Teaching and the Teacher, and, as a response to those, simply to submit to the discipline of the Guru as Teacher. In the midst of such a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

disciplined life of study, function, and relationship, the options of seeking are not fulfilled, and self-observation arises naturally. It is this spontaneous self-observation, not performed as a technique but awakened through the Guru's Teaching and discipline, which intensifies to the point of real insight, enquiry, re-cognition, and radical intuition. Such is the mature fruit or grace of Satsang in the case of those who do sadhana. But the individual cannot *do* understanding, nor can he *do* no-seeking and no-dilemma. Therefore, what he is given to do is simply forms of appropriate action. He does it as submission to the Teacher on the basis of the Teaching. He does not do understanding, but in this graceful process of response and discipline, he *spontaneously* understands. He does not *do* no-seeking or no-dilemma, but in the case of real understanding in him, dilemma and seeking are obviated.

Such sadhana may not be separated from conscious response to the Teaching and acknowledgment and submission to the Teacher. If these are absent, separated from each other, imbalanced, or left in a mediocre and nominal state of observance, sadhana becomes dry, empty, a merely external and superficial practice.

When the student has fulfilled this sadhana in enquiry and real understanding, so that he has begun to intuit his true Nature and Condition, Satsang is expanded in him. Then he is a disciple. Then he begins to respond to the Guru as Siddhi. He responds to the Guru with the true sacrifice of love or real attention, and acknowledges him, on the basis of understanding (even as the student's response is based on his discovery of the Teaching and a real confrontation with it), as the very Self. The disciple does the sadhana of re-cognition in the company of the Guru as the Siddha of the Heart.

The devotee is one who has matured to the point of radical intuition, consciousness *as* the Heart, that Consciousness that *is* the Heart. He has surrendered to the Guru as the Siddhi of Consciousness, to the point where radical intuition has awakened in him, and he sees the Heart is not Self-knowledge in the exclusive sense, but the intuition of Real-God, the Real Condition of all conditions. When one who does the sadhana of a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

devotee enjoys radical intuition to the point of the realization of the Heart as the regenerated Form of Amrita Nadi (in which the world is known as World, the Nature, Condition, Form, Source, and Process that is the all-inclusive Divine Reality) *then* he is a devotee in Truth. The devotee turns to the Guru as very Divine, and to the very Divine as the Real Condition which consumes Guru, God, and Self. He turns to the Guru as the perfect or inclusive Siddhi and Siddha, which is the Heart, not only as the intuition of the Self-Nature but also as the inclusive Divine (Real-God, God-Light, and Fullness), the Divine Person or Real Condition, which includes and indeed is the devotee.

The Guru, the Teaching, and the Community, the instruments of Satsang or Divine Communion, are present for the student in the form of Instruction and the functional Demand for sadhana. (This corresponds to the Teacher-Function of the Man of Understanding.) They are present for the disciple as an Illuminated and Illuminating Presence. (This corresponds to the Function of Spiritual Master.) And they are present for the devotee as the very Divine Person, the Nature, Condition, Form, Source, and Process of the World, the Divine Reality. (This corresponds to the Function of the Divine Form.)

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

ONLY THEN DOES THE STUDENT TOUCH MY HEART: The Conscious Process as Prasad

[Students] also continue to approach me through the formality of Prasad, and their lives continue to develop as service to me. However, the formal process of Prasad is not engaged during our times of sitting. It is done by students before or after I appear in the Hall. The time of sitting is an outwardly non-formal extension or realization of the formal sacrament of Prasad. Therefore, the student engages in an inwardly formal process that essentially duplicates the outward formalities of the sacrament of Prasad. This inwardly formal process is what is implied by my invitation to students to simply sit with me and be consciously involved, along with me, in the enjoyment of our mutual company.

Satsang is the condition of life in which there is constant and conscious involvement in a total, practical, and mutually sacrificial relationship with the Guru, or the living Divine Presence. This Satsang is the foundation principle of the way of Understanding. It is realized in action in more total, perfect, and spiritually profound ways as the stages of sadhana develop. The new Communion devotee realizes this Satsang in the form of the practical or functional devotion of his or her life as service to me. The student takes this a step further. When sitting with me in the Satsang Hall, at Persimmon or at home, the student constantly sacrifices himself to me and constantly receives the Prasad of my spiritual influence. As long as he or she can consciously maintain this activity while sitting with me in the Satsang Hall, the student may remain until I get up to leave. If distractions begin to hold his attention too powerfully, then the student should leave the room and continue his sadhana in the form of practical service to me. (When sitting at home or under circumstances when I am not physically present, the student may spend up

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

to an hour each time, twice a day, in this non-formal process of Prasad.)

Sitting with me is Satsang, it is always the great occasion of Prasad, it is mutual sacrifice. The life of Satsang is right fulfillment of the Law, which is Sacrifice. Therefore, the student simply sits with me, just as all my devotees simply live with me. But the living and the sitting must be forms of the Law, forms of sacrifice in the manner or after the model of the formal occasion of Prasad.[4]

Since he is already involved in the second or spiritual stage of the way of Divine Communion, the new student in the way of Understanding will already have been sitting with Bubba in formal Satsang. And the initiation of the Guru-Siddhi will essentially already be active in him. And, in the beginning of his work in the way of Understanding, the form of his sadhana is not essentially different from his practice as a Communion devotee. He continues to witness the stirring up of his whole subjective life in the intense Presence and Power of the Guru. If he maintains the form of his sadhana, he will neither indulge nor suppress all this. He will simply observe it as it arises while continuing in the momentum of his ordinary, functional life. We all tend to get distracted—if not horrified—at some of the content that is revealed to us. Thus, we temporarily lose (actually *abandon*) the thread of sadhana. But when the student sees something about himself, he should, like the Communion devotee, simply take it into account and continue to sacrifice himself to Bubba through the practical conditions of life. In the midst of formal sitting, if some sort of content arises, he should simply turn his attention again to Bubba.

Therefore, the student should sit in my Company, but he should constantly and consciously sacrifice or surrender himself to me all the while. This is not to be a self-conscious effort. It is not a kind of "working on yourself." It is simply a matter of the constant return of attention, with love, to my Presence. In the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

> *process the individual will observe the modifications of his attention. He will observe distractions and subjective involvements of all kinds. When these arise, he should simply return and yield his attention to me. This is his gift of self, his real sacrifice. When this is done, I return to him my own Gift, my own Presence, my Prasad, my spiritual influence.*[5]

It is not that your subjective "stuff" *may* arise in Bubba's Presence. It is *supposed* to, so that the conscious process may begin in you. But if you get involved in that content and distracted to the point of being unable to return attention to the Guru, then it is time to get up from meditation and go out and perform that same sacrifice in more tangible ways. Many students find that when they actually do leave the Satsang Hall and go serve in some practical fashion, they feel the Guru's Presence in their lives more powerfully than when they were sitting distracted in his Presence in the Hall. Bubba recently wrote,

> *The true sacrificial approach to me, the true turning of self to the practice of devotion, which is the whole life made to serve me under all conditions, ensures that our spiritual connection is alive and my quickening and awakening Siddhi will be effective.*[6]

What Bubba means by devotion is not emotional enthusiasm, but living commitment. If you are committed to the Guru rather than to your own transformation, you will always do what is appropriate.

The core of the student's life, then, is the continued self-sacrifice that began in the second stage of the way of Divine Communion. As a student, however, you are beginning to receive the Guru's Prasad in forms that you perhaps could not fully appreciate as a Communion devotee. Unless you are constantly reestablishing yourself in the principle of sacrifice to the Guru, you may not be able to appreciate these forms of Prasad even now. It sometimes seems impossible, when

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

starkly witnessing your withdrawal from others, to recognize and use that observation as Prasad. You have to be sensitive to the intuitively happy, free quality of all real observation as a spontaneous event of Grace. And you have to live your sadhana of surrendering your life, negativity included, to the Guru. As Bubba says, happiness, freedom from concern, is itself the discipline. Again, it sometimes seems unnecessarily austere to really surrender the delicious energies and blisses that may awaken in you as a result of the Guru's Presence. In that case you have to resort again to service and sacrifice to Bubba. Those effects of the Guru's Prasad also must be observed; as a student you have no right to them. Your business as a student is the comprehension of your entire life game. In the Community, the way of action that serves such intelligence will always be demanded of you, again and again, every day and every hour. And so, in time, as you yield without dramatization all your preferences, inclinations, and patterns of avoidance, the conscious process will intensify as real self-observation, insight, and enquiry.

When Bubba speaks of non-dramatization, by the way, he does not mean that the student must become a perfect human being! To try to do that would miss the point. The student has to see the failure of his life, the impossibility of "succeeding" at sadhana. His vital stance and motion as a separate human being in the world must be undermined in student sadhana. So the actual play of it does not read like a story of perfect will, intensity, commitment, and faultless action. The student is continually seeing his faults, continually being confronted with his inclinations to dramatize his emotions, his laziness, his boredom, his cravings—you name it, it all comes up. And every now and again, he blows it. But the secret to sadhana, even if you've blown it temporarily, is to pick up again the thread of your submission to the Guru and become responsible for what you have seen. As Bubba says, "just don't do that any more." It is not a matter of correcting your failings or suppressing your tendencies, but of allowing yourself to see immediately what all that amounts to—the avoidance of relationship. If your observation is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

true, you may then become responsible in those areas, instead of remaining automatically subject to your unconscious and subconscious whims.

> *The student's service to me, under and as all conditions, is his only meditation, until enquiry. My service is in the forms of Teaching, Community, and Siddhi (as Prasad and Grace in every phase of sadhana).*
>
> *I look for this service, this loving sacrifice. Only then does the student touch my heart. Such a one is given everything freely, happily, and in the proper time.*[7]

> *As this process of Satsang or Prasad continues over time under all the conditions of sadhana, the student will see the development of true hearing, random self-observation, and insight. When these have matured, then he may also adapt to the responsibility of enquiry. Enquiry, then, becomes the form of his meditation in Satsang, under all conditions, the responsible means whereby he abides always, consciously, and intuitively in my Presence.*[8]

SELF-OBSERVATION IS ABSOLUTELY ECSTATIC

From all this, we can see that the whole development of the conscious process at the core of the way of Understanding is a manifestation of the Guru's Prasad. It is all Grace and all dependent upon your surrender of your life to the Guru in practical terms. Moreover, once we do become sensitive to its truly Divine qualities, even the early stages of this conscious process become very happy events for us. Self-observation, for instance, which sounds a little dry and often reveals our subjective life in its most grotesque and nasty forms, is in fact a perfectly joyous occasion of Grace.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Now that members of the Community only begin to deal with the conscious process if they are obviously inclined to it, and only when their sadhana as devotees of the Guru is mature, it is easier to appreciate that real conscious joy more quickly and truly than in the early days of the Ashram. Bubba spent several years laying the groundwork of the way of Understanding. Because he took such pains to describe and demonstrate in detail the nature of the activity of Narcissus and the various qualities of action that we would see in the course of understanding that activity, and because we tend, due to our own karmic inclination, to focus upon the content of our lives rather than to enjoy his Presence with us, most devotees involved in the early stages of the Community became obsessed with trying to achieve self-observation, insight, etc. We treated these activities in Consciousness as if they were activities of mind. We became very concerned to have it all occur in us, very absorbed in seeing all kinds of negative things about our own lives and those of our friends.

All of that, of course, had nothing to do with the true dynamics of the way of Understanding. In this radical way of inspection, you certainly do see all kinds of unpleasant things about yourself—there are nothing but unpleasant things about yourself, from the point of view of real Consciousness! But that witnessing in Truth is an absolutely ecstatic event.

Why? Because self-observation in the way of Understanding, in the midst of the life of Divine Communion, is simple, immediate, and instantaneous restoration to perfect God-consciousness. It doesn't carry with it all the celestial trumpets and miraculous feelings of expansion that we ignorantly associate with God-consciousness in our thoughts and imagery. But it *is* very God-consciousness, nonetheless. Self-observation is spontaneous, present, uncaused, perfect absorption in the Guru, who is Consciousness itself.

The process of discriminative, intuitive insight is a good indicator of the simultaneous sublimity and simplicity of life with the Siddha-Guru. There is nothing extraordinary about it. As an illumination, it is so quiet and free of dramatic effects that we quite often miss its

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

appearance or fail to enjoy its true quality. Self-observation is entirely a Grace—it involves no effort whatsoever. And it occurs in the midst of any and all of the ordinary moments of our lives, when we are already founded securely in the devotional life of sacrifice to the Guru through the practical conditions relative to money, food, sex, study, and service. It is completely different from any form of deliberately watching, observing, or analyzing yourself.

Self-watching is a kind of solution: you analyze your behavior, your experiences, your circumstances, your thoughts, feelings, and all the rest. You assume a kind of abstracted "witness" point of view, stand back, see it all, and then you get disgusted with yourself or decide to do something about it, etc. You will notice that whenever this occurs, you become dull, self-concerned, very conscious of dilemma, of problem.

Self-observation is that insight in which what you might otherwise watch, or notice in yourself, is undone. It cannot occur as a method, as a kind of practice. True self-observation is not a matter of putting yourself forward in some kind of witnessing point of view to see the things that are occurring. Self-observation occurs when you are not present as a self, watching. Self-observation occurs in natural, functional moments of self-forgetting in which you are simply doing things. In other words, basically when you are fulfilling the conditions for sadhana that the Guru has given you, when you are living them in the spirit of Satsang, in the spirit of the Teaching, simply doing it in ordinary terms, at random within such a process you suddenly see or comprehend something. . . . When we are seated in the dimension of consciousness itself, not in the seat of the brain as a strategic position, we suddenly grasp the entire play that is our humanity. When you are free of all manipulative exercise, you are like a mirror to your own event and the process of your life shows itself to you in instant comprehension.[9]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: I'm not sure what the difference is between self-observation and self-watching.

BUBBA: The difference becomes clear if you do sadhana. Self-watching, or conventional self-observation, is itself a technique, a method. It is not necessarily one that you adopt, that you devote time to, like reciting a mantra. It is something that some people do as that kind of technique, but it is more commonly the kind of method that is a natural strategy, a common strategy, a part of the accepted notion of sanity. Everybody is engaged in this practice of self-watching to one or another degree. Thus, you find yourself at random moments all day long looking at yourself, thinking about it all. But self-observation, real self-observation, is not something done methodically as a technique.

DEVOTEE: It just happens?

BUBBA: In a sense you could say it just happens. It is not an activity of the ego, of your deciding to analyze yourself. This sadhana is not generated by my prescribing self-observation to you. Rather, it is generated on the basis of a consideration of the Teaching, a natural turning to the Guru, accepting his conditions with understanding, and fulfilling these conditions from hour to hour, always turning into the form of these conditions, making them the form of one's relationship to the Guru. This is sacrifice in its natural form. In the midst of that life there are real moments of insight from time to time. And when such insight appears, it is not in the form, "Oh, shucks! Will you look at that!" That kind of information comes from self-watching. When you find yourself out, that is self-watching. That is data. That is images that you capture about yourself. All that analysis is a natural product of self-watching.

But the natural product or expression of real self-observation is radical insight. Where there is such insight, all the things that you feel bad about on the basis of your self-analysis or self-watching are undone. In a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

moment of real insight, there is no obstruction, there is no bad guy. The principle of the ego is not present in the moment of real self-observation, but it is always there in the moment of self-watching.

Understand that everyone engages in self-watching. You are not prohibited from self-watching. However, you are not asked *to self-watch. You will simply and randomly notice yourself self-watching, and you will begin to understand this strategy in yourself. You will see what it represents, why it is there. You will see what it really is. What is self-watching? It is self-meditation. What is that? It is contraction. You will really see it. You will know it to be that. And in those moments, that is insight. That is self-observation, that is understanding.*[10]

Essentially, the conditions are preventions of dramatization. They are simple, appropriate, natural, life-supporting, and all of that, and from a certain point of view they are good, harmonious, sattwic things to do. But that is not their essential function. They are not true in themselves. Their essential function in the way of Understanding is to prevent the dramatization that you are always enacting via your functions. When, in some functional area, you are prevented from dramatization, you automatically observe yourself. Dramatization prevents self-observation because it gives you self-enactment through energies of various kinds and provides you with the consolation of unconsciousness. The conditions are all ways of frustrating the intention to dramatize and be unconscious. Therefore, self-observation arises. It appears as cognition at the plane of the mind, and that's how you know you've observed yourself. But actually the root of self-observation is the Heart of Consciousness itself. That is why this self-observation is tantamount to Self-knowledge, knowledge of Brahman, knowledge of the Heart or Real-God ultimately.[11]

Thus, it should be clear that self-observation is essentially an ecstatic instant of absorption in our natural, Divine Condition, which is Satsang or Divine

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Communion. This is not anything like our usual notion of what ecstasy is. Commonly, ecstasy is thought of as a great rush of energy, or even absorption in energy or visionary light to the point of loss of body-consciousness. Real ecstasy, however, is this very understanding. It involves no loss of consciousness, but, on the contrary, restoration to the true position of Consciousness, which is always already ecstatic relative to the plane of life events. And that is the kind of free, spacious, clear enjoyment that occurs in a moment of real self-observation.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Truth or God is not a Condition to be realized by willful esoteric or super-scientific efforts, or any fortunate and religious act of Divinity. Such Happiness is truly and permanently realized only on the basis of the complete moral or sacrificial transformation of the apparently individual and human consciousness. It is not a matter of merely relaxing life or body and sending the attention elsewhere by meditation or by grace. It is a matter of the undermining of the whole principle of one's ordinary and extraordinary actions and forms of knowledge. Few are willing to endure such a process. Therefore, illusory and consoling ways have been created by compassionate, clever, and deluded men. But the scheme of all the universes, mortal and immortal, high and low, with its endless times of birth and death, and its numberless kinds of learning, is itself the way and the destiny of all ordinary and extraordinary men. Only those who weary of the way, as well as every kind of escape from the way, become willing to engage the Divine process in which their very life-consciousness is sacrificed in its own Condition and Nature. All others, high and low, are devoted to their own unending path, from which there is no perfect relief, except on the day all worlds, ages, and heavens dissolve in the sleep of God.[12]

The sacrifice Bubba Free John demands of his students and devotees, in other words, is absolute. There is nothing consoling about it. It requires a total crisis of life and consciousness.

A crisis, in the true sense that Bubba means, is not, however, some negative and disastrous event. In the talk "Guru as Prophet," he described it as a perfect turnabout in consciousness, the spontaneous movement into a new principle of existence.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Simply to go through neurotic episodes and heavy difficulties and all the rest is not the crisis of understanding. That is simply meditation on your own suffering. The Guru serves the individual's capacity for critical self-attention, the possibility to really observe, to have insight into the quality of his ordinary condition and activity. He serves individuals by bringing them into that awareness in a form that is itself transformation. Not dwelling on difficulty, not being anxious, not being simply upset, they pass through that underlying condition in such a way that it is illumined or undermined.

The crisis he serves in individuals does not negate. It illuminates, perfects. In order for that living intelligence to manifest in individuals, there must be passage through that ordinary condition which motivates the whole pattern and ritual of life, the path of Narcissus. That must be known. That intelligence must be the foundation of life, and it requires a purifying confrontation with the life of tendencies. The intelligence for bearing it, for allowing it to become a truly transforming event, is what the man of understanding communicates. All the instruments of his Ashram serve that crisis of understanding—not the mere drifting into your difficulties in the form of neurotic episodes, but the transforming event of real intelligence, real self-observation, real insight that becomes enquiry, re-cognition, radical intuition.[13]

There are many "instruments" in the Community by which Bubba constantly serves this crisis of understanding in his students (or the crisis of devotion in his devotees—in either form of sadhana, the crisis is necessary). Bubba's own action, his speech and behavior and dealings with the individual and the Community, is the most potent of these instruments. The student finds himself constantly offended by Bubba in one way or another, even if only by the simple fact of his obvious happiness. As we wrote earlier, Bubba's

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

active, personal movements among his devotees are all forms of his Teaching work. His Existence is absolute, omnipresent, not limited to his personal form. So he uses that personal form entirely and only to serve the crisis of transformation in his students and devotees.

Another potent instrument of the crisis, of course, is the life of practical conditions. Bubba has written, "The sadhana of assuming conditions in Satsang, which awakens a crisis of self-observation and understanding, is the way of the knowing. Thus, what is studied is later revealed or proven in sadhana." The principle of this functional sadhana is that what is not used becomes obsolete. The usual man constantly reinforces his karmic tendencies by resorting to them in every moment—literally, *every* moment—dramatizing his preferences and the ritual, unconscious strategies of his seeking rather than living in God. He can never discard the baggage of this life of consolation and search, because he has no way of realizing that it is baggage. He is always using it!

When one begins to do sadhana, the principle of the search is undone and replaced in us by the Divine Principle. The moment you enter responsibly into relationship with Bubba Free John as Guru, you are already saved. There is only God. Your coming to know and live that Truth involves this crisis of transformation, but there is nothing riding on it because you are already living with the Guru, who is living God to you. From this point of view, the practical life-conditions become a humorous responsibility, a pleasurable discipline one undertakes as service to the Guru.

The conditions themselves are life-supporting, and they serve to turn you from exploitation of your karmic life to fulfillment of the natural laws that govern psycho-physical existence. They also have a larger purpose: to align all your functions to the great and universal Law of sacrifice. Thus, while they may be undertaken happily in response to the Guru's Presence and demands, you will probably not always enjoy fulfilling them. Because they are intended to *frustrate* you. All your inclinations toward fulfillment will be

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

frustrated if you take on the conditions of sadhana with great intensity. As Bubba likes to say, "There's something here for everyone!" Some one or several of these appropriate, harmonious, natural ways to live in the human world will really get on your nerves, really test you. You will feel the heat, the *tapas*, of this sadhana if you turn to Bubba in the midst of that test and continue to serve him through the very condition that offends you. That is the crisis, the turning. That heat brings your suffering to consciousness and serves your increasing absorption in Satsang itself.

The way of Understanding requires that you live the life-conditions absolutely. You may not opt for relief from these conditions, because of what they must serve in you. On the other hand, as soon as you get good and comfortable with them, Bubba or his disciples are likely to call a spontaneous Community celebration, and require you to completely ruin your purity with cigarettes and whiskey! This is an Ashram, again, not a health food store or a monastery. You are here to be undone, not fulfilled or allowed to succeed as a separate individual. At those times, the breaking the practical conditions in one form or another becomes your condition, and produces the same heat in you through different means. And, perhaps, just as you get used to parties, suddenly everyone is returned to an "ordinary, pleasurable life." The heat generated by maintaining sadhana in the midst of all these changes, by always assuming the practical conditions (or their suspension) with intensity and consciousness, and without self-indulgence, awakens and intensifies the process of self-observation, the foundation of real understanding.

THE CONDITION OF COMMUNITY

The condition of living in community itself serves this crisis, this heat. You cannot rationalize your misery or mediocrity in the company of an unreasonably happy devotee, nor can you avoid the demand to be

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

happy and straight in God when you are among those who are truly doing such sadhana. Contact with the Community serves you by simply demanding that you serve the Guru, by requiring that you drop all concerns, by showing you your persistent avoidance of relationship in myriad ways, by refusing to indulge you or to let you exploit yourself. It is often infuriating to have to put up with such demands from other people, until you become sensitive and available to the process of losing face. Such difficult moments, when you come smack up against your refusal, are the times that serve the most if you do sadhana and make use of them.

Because the condition of community is so potent, a student in the way of Understanding is obliged to enter the formal Community as a condition of his sadhana. This means that you share your life in intimate household circumstances with other students and Communion devotees, and surrender all the paraphernalia of private survival, yielding your body, your money, and your very life to the Community. No one is going to come along and take the shirt off your back—but, still, you should by this time in your life with Bubba be prepared to give it! As a student you have no doubt that Satsang or Divine Communion is your very Life, and the Guru is all that counts, really. Because you live intimately with others who are doing sadhana, you feel very directly the Guru's demand for study and devotional practice, for service, for the lawful and appropriate management of your vital functions, for the practical maintenance of your household, for conscious, humorous responsibility in all areas of your ordinary life. Sadhana with the Guru is a happy affair, but it is not a lark!

You are also encouraged, as a student, to assume personal conditions above and beyond the generally stated disciplines of student life. These should be carefully considered disciplines that get to the core of some particular pattern of dramatization that is dear to your heart, some habit that you repeat unconsciously, some little interpersonal ritual that the stated conditions do not really handle. If something like that arises or becomes obvious to your intimates, you should, with

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

their agreement or that of other responsible members of the Community, assume a personal condition designed to undermine that strategy. This is how you will begin to make that area of dramatization obsolete. Taking on such conditions is simply a way of maintaining yourself in relationship and becoming vulnerable to your intimates. Like any other discipline, it must be lived in the happy, sacrificial spirit of Satsang with Bubba. (In general, by the way, you will find that most personal forms of dramatization can be redressed by applying one of the already existing conditions with great conscious intensity.)

SADHANA GROUPS

In the way of Divine Communion, devotees gather regularly for devotional singing, discussion of their enjoyment of Satsang, readings from works by Bubba and others about God and Divine Realization. In the way of Understanding, students likewise meet in groups, which can also be devotional in nature, but, further than that, which are intended to serve the process of self-observation and responsibility in individuals.

If you and your fellow students undertake a sadhana group in the spirit of analysis and problem-solving, without presently enjoying Satsang in each other's company, you will find it a very unpleasant and basically useless occasion. Take it from us. Bubba's longtime students and disciples have been sitting together in so-called sadhana groups regularly for years, and whenever we have gotten into analyzing each other and trying to correct behavior, everything has become dull, grim, and full of tension. When people try to "deal" with each other without already acknowledging their love for each other in Divine Communion and their love and present enjoyment of the Guru's Presence, they commit all kinds of offenses to each other and do anything but "serve." If you ap-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

proach a sadhana group as a possible remedy, you will in most cases come out feeling a lot worse!

If, however, you live these occasions with humor and love, full already of Bubba's Presence and Grace, they become another kind of event entirely. Then you can talk to each other about what you observe, confess your own humorous pratfalls, even difficulties, in sadhana—you can say anything and it will not affect the fundamental communication you are sharing, which is that of Divine Communion itself.

You do not make your relationship to one another a form of your relationship to me. You do not relate to me through one another. You relate to one another. Well, what are you going to find if you relate to one another? You will find more limited assholes, more problems, more demands, more roles to play, more circumstances, more fulfillment of life. But if you make your relationship to one another the form of your service to me, just as living all the conditions of sadhana, then you will undo the limitations through which you approach one another. You will contemplate me in your relationship to one another. You will go beyond all of these limitations and be humorous in one another's company. You will then love one another.

But if you are not enjoying me in one another's company, there is no way you are going to get it straight, no way that a sadhana group can come to an end! And no sadhana group should come to an end until each individual is enjoying my Company. If everybody sits down in some sadhana group enjoying my Company, there will be no dealing with one another, you know, "You do this and I do that." You will talk about me, you will talk about God, you will enjoy one another, and you will get up, you will study or do some practical form of sadhana. Sadhana groups can be very brief. It is better if they are brief, because they are basically annoying![14]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

As the student becomes more attuned to this naturally ecstatic quality of self-observation in Satsang, he becomes less concerned for the particular content of his life, all the qualities and habits that comprise his separate individuality. But that looseness, that space, only allows the process to quicken in him, so that he sees more and more of what he is "always doing." The various strategies of his life are revealed to him, and he must take responsibility for them.

Over time, if you become a student in the way of Understanding, you will see the whole content of your life as the manifestation of your avoidance, your resistance to turning, to giving yourself to the Guru fully. By then, in fact, you will have already seen and become responsible for your gross, dramatic strategies—stuff on the level of beating your wife, all the heavy, obvious negativity, withdrawal, self-obsession, and resistance. You could never have realized your ordinary human life as service to Bubba if you had not already surrendered that sort of stuff.

This brings up an important point, which we mentioned when first discussing the life-conditions in Part II, "The Way of Divine Communion." It is not as if the devotee in the way of Divine Communion never enjoys self-observation or the conscious process. He cannot help but enjoy it! The Siddhi of the Guru is the Presence of the Heart, Real Consciousness, and it naturally reflects a man's activities of avoidance back to him through its potent intensification of his own Conscious Nature. It is only that the devotee in the way of Divine Communion is not obliged to make that reflection itself the personal focus and vehicle of his sadhana. The same reflection occurs in the Communion devotee as in the student. However, he has a very different relationship to it. On the basis of that reflection, the devotee then consciously and deliberately turns himself to the Guru, yielding the particular content of what he has seen to the Guru and receiving the Guru's Presence.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The student, however, must stand in that instant already responsible for what he has seen in consciousness. For him the observation itself implies responsibility. He certainly must go ahead and sacrifice his life's content to the Guru in active terms, like the Communion devotee. But the observation itself, used with intensity and commitment, should establish him in a fundamental knowledge that stands like a brake against that particular form of unconsciousness in the future. More and more, he stands present in the form of that very Consciousness that observes these turnings away. Less and less does he allow himself to sink unconsciously into dramatization of these patterns of karmic tendency. It is not a matter of willful determination, though sadhana certainly does involve effort and discipline. Rather, it is a matter of *too much knowledge*. The guy has seen it too clearly! He already has too much distance from it. The conscious, free nature of his observation only intensifies his natural intelligence to the point that he simply cannot perform the old acts of resistance unconsciously any more. If he does do that same thing again, he finds it excruciating, because now it is no longer unconscious resistance to sadhana and the Guru, but deliberate refusal of the Guru, who he already knows is his very Life.

The following discussion of "vitals, peculiars, and solids" provides a good example of the kind of inspection that the student of the way of Understanding must become responsible for.

Every person represents a complex mixture of these three basic human strategies. Everyone is predominantly a vital, solid, or peculiar person, usually with some of the other two patterns also evident in his case. If you remain a devotee in the way of Divine Communion, you will certainly observe certain of these qualities in yourself. Other members of the Community, in the natural play of our lives together, will certainly bring your qualities and games to your attention! But you will not be responsible for any genuine inspection of these qualities in yourself. (If that were necessary, we would have included this section in the earlier part of the book!) No, all you have to do as a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

devotee in the way of Divine Communion is sacrifice it, whatever it is, to the Guru, and enjoy his Presence. You don't even have to know what it is that you are sacrificing, except that it is not him, and Communion with him in God is what you are here for, what you crave, what you exist to enjoy.

As a student of the way of Understanding, however, you very definitely are responsible to inspect these qualities in yourself and to become responsible for them in consciousness. Not as a way of cataloguing or analyzing your existence, but as a way, through intelligent discrimination, of penetrating more and more perfectly the action by which you compulsively turn from present Communion. You also exist only for that, you crave it, you thrive on it, but, because of your particular karmic make-up, you must be *smart* as well as devoted. In fact your intelligence, not merely mind but consciousness itself, must *become* your devotion.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

THE THREE QUALITIES OF LIFE

Every moment in life is a strategy relative to vital shock, that contraction of the life-force which is felt as a cramp in the solar plexus, in the vital center, and which is effective through subconscious and unconscious influence.[15] It is at the level of vital life that we cognize our existence most intimately, and it is in the area of life, of vitality, that we experience suffering and dilemma most directly.

The student stage of sadhana in the way of Understanding is the stage in which the phenomena of the gross physical or vital life are inspected and their effects obviated in consciousness. Everything that arises is a response to the life-force, whose qualities or manifestations in the gross dimension of existence have been negatively developed in the usual man. What you observe as the content of your life is actually a reaction to the force of life itself, to the literal fact and energy of being alive. And as the process of self-observation awakens in you, you will begin to see patterns of reaction that define your own participation in the process of life.

Because of vital shock, the usual man resists the process of life, which Bubba calls conductivity. The life-force emanates from the God-Light, its Source above the body, the mind, and the world, and moves into the psycho-physical being down through the frontal functions and up the spine.

> *This full circle is the law of manifest life. That should be spontaneous, simple. That is health. It is also sanity. That is the human cycle, the psycho-physical circuit.*[16]

The usual man does not participate in this blissful circuit, though if it ceased for even a moment he would die! Instead he reacts to it, resists it, tries to escape it, suppress it, or empty himself of its energy. His very birth is a contraction of that process, and so he adapts his life to contraction rather than to the lawful process of conductivity. Thus, he aligns his life with the effects

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

of the life-force rather than to its Source and spends his life, either consciously or unconsciously, looking for ways to rid himself of the sensation of dilemma.

The extent to which an individual participates in the conductivity of the life-force has been described in the scriptures of the Hindu traditions in terms of the three qualities of life, or *gunas: tamas, rajas,* and *sattwa.* Tamas is the degree of available life-energy prior to motion. Rajas is flow or movement. And sattwa is clarity, intelligence. These qualities, which simply describe the qualities of life as they are manifested in every human being, are nevertheless negatively developed to a greater or lesser extent in everyone. Thus the negative development of tamas, or the degree of available life-energy, appears as inertia, enervation, emptiness, and absence of force. The negative development of rajas, or flow, manifests as obstruction, emotion, agitation, disturbance. And the negative development of sattwa or clarity appears as aberration, suppression, and concern.

Now there can be no doubt about it: Everyone who comes as a devotee to Bubba Free John is nothing but a "usual man." Every one of us represents some odd, karmic, negative development of these three qualities of life, some personal variation on a life of vital shock. If you remain in the way of Divine Communion, this particular, gross aspect of your life as Narcissus is undone in the course of the maturing of the first three stages of practice.

If you go on, however, to include the disciplines of the way of Understanding, then this gross avoidance fundamentally becomes a matter of responsibility in the student stage, and these three functions of vital existence are transformed during that period of sadhana.

The three qualities of life are also identified with specific functions and dimensions of vital existence. Tamas is identified with the vital center and physical life. Rajas is associated with the heart center and the emotional-sexual dimension of existence. And sattwa is associated with the mind and the mental dimension.

In the process of self-observation, quickened by

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

contact with the Siddhi of Satsang with the Guru in God, the strategies by which you dramatize the qualities of life are undermined, and you begin to include the qualities of life that you have been excluding and to align the functions of your existence with their Source. Thus, as a mature student, you enjoy intensity where there was enervation, harmony where there was disturbance, and clarified intelligence where there was aberration. You become human.

Bubba describes three "types" of people (or strategies of people) who embody the three general forms of play on life conceived as dilemma. He has named these "types" the solid person, the peculiar person, and the vital person. These three types represent the three fundamental strategies by which men seek to escape the pain and destiny implied in vital shock. Each one represents a different play on life as dilemma. Therefore, each represents a fundamental liability that must be understood and transcended.

These strategies are karmic, binding one to a ritual of avoidance. Until you take into account the liabilities represented by the types you may see in yourself, your sadhana will not be fruitful. You will always be fulfilling the conditions of sadhana from a false point of view, because you are not accounting for your fundamental game. So you should consider the qualities, the resistance, represented by these types and observe how you tend to dramatize these strategies in your own life.

THE VITAL PERSON

The vital person has a "moon" in his navel. He exploits or yields to the descending power of the vital (which is strengthened by his refusal to be at odds with it either through the conscious mind's resistance or by urges to escape its manifest conditions via ascent). As his moon phases, he may take on apparent qualities of solidity and peculiarity, but they are only a play in him which further demonstrates the underlying power of his fixed strategy. Just so, the peculiar and solid strategies

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

may reflect one another, becoming temporarily exchanged, in order not to be subject to consciousness.

The vital person characteristically dramatizes the negative development of tamas, the degree of available life-energy.

> *He is obsessed with submission to the vital force. Just as the moon is the reflection of the light of the sun, the vital person must turn to the sun itself and become a devotee in sunlight. His recourse must be to the Guru and the Teaching and the Community. He must do the sadhana of attention to the principal communications and agents of Truth. This is his only recourse. He too must understand his own liability, how he is continually going through this cycle of fascination with the vital force, which is only a reflection of what is prior and transcendent and ultimate. To the degree that he knows this liability in himself, to that same degree and with even more force he must turn to what is the source, the ultimate and True Condition of all of that, and only that turning will make obsolete his fascination.*[17]

When his moon is full, the vital person may be hyper-active, ironic, gleeful, negative, indulging compulsive habits of speech or eating, violent, self-conscious, obsessed, all qualities which anyone may manifest at any time. But the vital person communicates these qualities with force, from the navel. There is no humor in him, only irony or hysteria. He becomes completely absorbed in whichever aspect of his vital life happens to be in phase.

The vital person is usually a very simple, lively person, very strong, earthy, energetic, even apparently enthusiastic, but also crazy, always reacting to the endless cycles.

> *With that same intensity and more he must turn to the sun, not out of any motivation, not out of any simple obedience, but based on his understanding of what his liabilities are. Just as*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

simply as he is imbedded in vital fascination, he must be simply involved in his sadhana, in a life of Satsang. The vital person's sadhana is simply devotional, not in the emotional sense only, although he may be emotional. He must do very simple service. He must continually be turned to that dimension of Truth which appears as the Dharma, the Teaching itself, in the person of the Guru as well as the Divine Nature which is itself the Guru. And he must be turned to the Community, which is the living manifestation or process of the Dharma and the Guru's influence. The vital person must do very simple service to the three principal forms of the Truth as it is communicated (the Guru, the Teaching, and the Community). To the degree that the vital person simply serves, the cycle of vital fascination is made obsolete. It is undone through non-use, just as anything is undone that is limited.[18]

THE PECULIAR PERSON

The peculiar person has a "hole" in his navel. He exploits the ascending power of the vital (which is weakened in vital shock and thus made capable of abandonment of the descended conditions by a refusal to reflect them to the conscious mind). He dramatizes the negative development of rajas, or flow, movement. This type finds it difficult to meet the conditions of ordinary life, preferring instead the exotic or extraordinary experience. He finds it difficult to be ordinary. He is always tending to drift out of life into illusory attachments. The peculiar person characteristically dramatizes the negative development of flow, of movement of the life-force (rajas).

In the peculiar person there is more or less exclusive attention, or subjection, to the ascending movement, the movement out of life. The peculiar person has a hole in his navel. He is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

weak in his stability relative to life and is tied to these ecstatic possibilities. They occur in him as functional liabilities just as they occur in a psychotic. The peculiar person is not, in general, psychotic, but the same thing that makes psychosis is evident in the peculiar person.

Those who are more or less peculiar tend toward dingbat religious and spiritual bullshit. They read and sympathize with all the books and are inclined to say that it is all true and right. They are generally unstable at the level of life, vitally weak in various ways. They sympathize with all that gets them out of life into some twinkie spiritual dimension that is free of the body. So they are subject to ecstasies and mysticisms of an illusory kind, with practically no stimulation at all, by yielding to the pattern of subjective distraction which is their karmic quality.[19]

The special demand or discipline for the peculiar person is that he direct his attention to the practical affairs of life at every moment. He must function in practical ways, by working with speech and body, by truly listening in his encounters with others, by turning to life instead of "spacing out" of life. The peculiar person often tends toward unusual interpretations of the life-conditions, involving himself in extraordinary business schemes, justifying part-time work, endlessly modifying his diet, and romanticizing sexual relationships.

The peculiar person is one who has to assume a life of functional responsibility from the time he opens his eyes in the morning until the time he goes to bed at night, and if he cops out for just five minutes, he will be crazy before dinner. So he has to do very practical things. No illusory airy-fairy crap. He has to really do something that is physical, mechanical in nature. He has to integrate himself with that level of function and assume it as a discipline.[20]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Because he is weak in the vital, the peculiar person frequently manifests chronic physical dysfunctions, and he may spend a very long time indulging his physical weakness with exotic treatments. In many, if not most, cases of people who manifest the more extreme tendencies toward peculiarity, these tendencies are founded in an organic disorder of some kind, an organic karma, a physical liability. So the peculiar person should have a medical examination, and his physical dysfunctions should be handled in a very matter-of-fact way, without lingering involvement in therapies of various kinds. He should follow a very strict and simple diet and harmonize the chemical aspect of his peculiar liability. (The peculiar person tends to become enervated, and so he must not indulge his tendency toward super-ascetic diet, prolonged or frequent fasting, long hours of work with little sleep, etc.)

Above all, the peculiar person should understand the liabilities of his constant "heights" and ecstasies, the special resistances that his "spirituality" represents.

> *An interesting thing about the traditional communications about spiritual life, particularly those of a mystical, esoteric, or yogic variety, is that they seem to favor the peculiar person. The more peculiar you are, it seems, the more spiritual you are, because these traditions are rooted in the problem of life and are trying exotically to get beyond it. So they exploit some of the peculiar patterns also evident in schizophrenia. They don't ultimately intend that you should become mad like a schizophrenic, but all their symbology, all their recommendations, seem to demand these exotic patterns of madness. So somebody who is peculiar will find a great deal of literature to justify his madness. That is why he must understand how this liability is effective in his own case.*[21]

Unlike the solid person, who tends to hold the life movements in place, especially those that are ascending,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

mystical, and expansive, the peculiar person exploits the movements of the life-force. The intuitive plane of consciousness, which is not something the peculiar person is, by tendency, very much involved with, does not tend to break through in his case. By not indulging his tendency toward the ascending movement of life and by stabilizing the center of life-consciousness at the navel, he becomes more sensitive to the conscious process, which is even prior to mind (although it does not exclude it), and is capable of doing real sadhana.

What I am criticizing in the peculiar type is his exclusive and strategic involvement with the ascending life-energy. By doing ordinary, functional sadhana, he may regain the entire spectrum of his existence, and the entire functional order will come alive in him—descending, ascending, transcendent, and prior. If he does not engage in sadhana relative to his strategy, he won't grasp the fullness that he represents.

Apart from his strategic involvement, what he does represent is part of the full realization of existence. The ascending life process must, indeed, be realized, and it is the purpose of one area of your sadhana ultimately to fully realize the life-dimension. But, before it can be realized in Truth, your strategic and exclusive involvement with it must be understood. The student sadhana, by requiring that you not dramatize or indulge the tendency in itself, serves the crisis of that understanding. Then, in the disciple stage, the ascending energy is regained in another form, and, coupled with other dimensions of this process, it retains its humor and fullness and does not involve the exclusion of other dimensions of existence.[22]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

THE SOLID PERSON

The solid person has a "stone" in his navel. He stands on the vital with the conscious mind, which remains subject to vital shock, and suppresses the activity of the vital, which is founded in dilemma and is full of complexes (fixed contractions).

The solid person dramatizes the negative development of sattwa, clarified intelligence. He manifests concern. He is the organizational type who conceptualizes and mentalizes life. He tends toward philosophies, mental structures, the practical ordering of existence. Basically he is afraid of the vital, so he suppresses his vital life in favor of the mind. He is always operating from the head, although he is continually subject to the invasion of emotions. Indeed, his "cool" or mental strategy is the product of a debilitating emotional reaction to life.

It is very difficult to get the solid person interested in the life movement. He is afraid to let it do what it is going to do. He thinks it is a raving gorilla or something, so he is always standing on top of the navel. It is difficult to get him interested in letting life become free and Divine until he falls out of the mental game, the defense that he builds out of fear, into that more intuitive affair. And when he does, all of his concerns for staying on top of life become gradually obsolete and the life movement begins in him again.

The solid person is suppressing the life phenomena. He is always cool, on top of it. So the life movement above and below that stone in his navel does not occur in him by tendency. He must do a natural sadhana that releases him from attention to the purely mental faculty so that he moves into that intuitive life, a life free of constant concern, of standing on the stone. The life movement will begin again in him at the same time that he stops fixing in mere mentality

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

out of fear and moves into a more natural (emotional-vital) and intuitive consciousness.[23]

The solid person must do sadhana under very functional, ordinary conditions, as everyone must. But he must do it without concern, without righteousness. The Guru has no problem getting the solid person to function. The solid person usually works very efficiently. But the Guru may work with a solid person by changing his functions a little bit, so that his functions are not so serious (or are not acknowledged to be so serious), and then he may do all kinds of things to upset the solid person's expected routine. It is also useful for the solid person to function in ways that do not require him to stand on his navel, that require him instead to see what he is doing. As Bubba says, "If all you have to do is cook dinner and wait on tables, and you are creating a universal philosophic system out of it, it becomes pretty clear to you what your game is."

Breaking down the expected flow of the solid person's life serves the crisis in him. The solid person freezes out everything below the mind. He freezes out or mentalizes vitality, sexuality, energy, everything robust and emotional. So if this pattern of suppressing vital life is confused or interrupted in such a one, the solid person finds himself living in these functions and feeling alive in them. And one of the first things to awaken quickly is his emotional life.

The solid person tends to be aggressively ordinary. He rarely, if ever, experiences kriyas or other exaggerated and ecstatic "spiritual" phenomena. Yet he is always hoping that he will have a spiritual experience. He is always waiting for the grand spiritual event to happen to him. For this reason, the peculiar person, who has these experiences all the time, is an offense to him. In the company of a peculiar person, the solid person feels that he should be experiencing something that he is not experiencing (or is afraid to experience).

The solid person must become interested in the practical affair of the life of understanding.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

He has to understand that he is packed into the mechanisms that control his vital existence, that there is nothing rising in him, no lightness in him, and that his need to have experiences is just a reflection of the whole body of his concerns. So, rather than looking for a proof of the spiritual process in his own life, for these grand events to occur, rather than waiting for a kriya or a vision, he should understand what the life of understanding is in his own case. He should understand that extraordinary experiences are not even necessary. They simply occur when it is appropriate. The spiritual process occurs in consciousness, for all persons, so the solid person should look for that level of spiritual life as anybody else should. But he will not realize the conscious process by exclusive reliance on the strategy of mind. He must first become established in a non-exclusive, open, relational condition of life, in which he is also alive in the emotional-vital dimensions of his psycho-physical being.[24]

Bubba has discussed the implications of the solid and peculiar strategies relative to the descended life-process:

It is interesting that both of these types ultimately wind up resisting the descended life-process, the solid person by standing on top of it and being very mentalized, and the peculiar person by leaping out of the body all the time. The fundamental movement of all traditions of seeking is the search for escape from the body, escape from the psycho-physical conditions. Peculiar and solid people represent the extreme dispositions of the traditions in general. In every case it is the body, the bodily condition, the function of descended life, that is assumed in itself to be the problem. There are all kinds of asceticisms and moralisms that peculiar and solid people are addicted to, just as everybody else is, but these types represent the classic kinds of resistance.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The sadhana in both of these cases is one that reintegrates them with the natural process of the descended life vehicle. Neither of these two types by tendency is interested in such a thing. In fact, every man by tendency is resistive to the realization of the descended life because it is the symbol in which he reads his fear. We identify the body itself, the psycho-physical condition itself, with fear, limitation, ignorance.

We are always trying to resist this hulk, escape it, stay on top of it, do all kinds of things to it. But, it is the conventional implication *of the body that we are suffering. The conventional* assumption *we make about the body is the root of our fear in functional terms. And in the peculiar and solid persons you see the classic examples of what happens when you assume the body, the psycho-physical condition itself, to be ignorance or threat and try to escape it in the two unique strategies that peculiar and solid people represent.*

There are peculiar and solid traditions, too. The whole human adventure is made up of this arbitrary split between the dimensions of energy (or life) and mind (or functional consciousness). The exploitation of the strategies of one or the other dimension is essentially and exclusively based on this prior fear, this conventional assumption that the descended life is a threat. If you read the traditions you will see how occupied they are with dealing with the body itself, and with desensitizing you to all the possibilities of having experiences at the level of ordinary life. The traditions are filled with such notions, and they are founded in ignorance. They are founded in this principal mood of fear in which we contract and make the conventional assumption of separate existence.

When that conventional assumption is no longer made, the descended life is free to be a game from the point of view of Truth. It is no longer a threat. It is no longer necessary to encase it in moralities, no longer necessary to stand on top of it, to conform it to any of the cultural and social cultic games that the world requires you to conform to. So in the man of understanding, life (inclusive of mind and energy), which

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

is suppressed and manipulated from the usual point of view, is liberated when known from the point of view of prior Consciousness in Truth.[25]

The three types are presented here as classic examples of the extremes of resistance. Most people cannot be classified as one type. Almost everyone represents one of these types at some time or another. The average person is a mixture of these possibilities. So it is useful for every individual to become familiar with all three types in order to know the liabilities of his personal strategies.

Each of these types represents an extreme or classic form of resistance to sadhana. However, the perfect form of the solid, peculiar, or vital strategy is rare. Everyone manifests all of these strategies, to a greater or lesser degree, in his approach to life. Therefore, the particular qualities presented by each type should be understood so that you can recognize them when they arise in your own case. It is not necessary that you try to determine which type you are. You probably dramatize the strategies of more than one of these types. But recognize them when they arise and apply the appropriate functional conditions.

The three types are a play on life in which life is conceived, on the unconscious basis of vital shock, to be dilemma. The three types are simply three characteristic or karmic strategies, each distinct and different from the others. The Real Condition may be described as the Sun. Each of the three types or strategies conceives of the Sun in limitation. The solid person conceives of the Sun as a stone (dead life which is always threatening to reawaken), and he stands on it with the armor of mind. The peculiar person conceives of the Sun as a hole in space, and he is always taking flight from the world through the exit of his own vital weakness. The vital person conceives of the Sun as a moon, a reflection of itself in fascinating vital form. Thus, he is always

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

yielding to vital phases as if they were delight, while always suffering in his independent soup.

All three types or strategies are a seeker's manipulation of the vital principle from the point of view of fear, mystery, suffering, unconscious motivation, and vital shock. Thus, each strategy is itself a continual meditation upon the felt sense of dilemma, and such ways realize only suffering in spite of their achieved distractions.

These three ways are the strategic characteristics of Narcissus. The way of Understanding is a communication directed to that one.[26]

Someone asked Bubba if it is important for each person to know what type he is. Bubba replied:

There is no appropriate strategy for determining what type you are. The Dharma is always present to confound you and confuse you and break down the position that you have already assumed. So it does not appear in the form of a simple formula or an easy solution to your problem. In fact, you are not supposed to solve the problem of what type you are. These descriptions are given to you only so that you can account for what you have already observed and thereafter be a little more intelligent in your own life. Your observations should lead to the taking on of conditions that are appropriate to what you are really all about. Apart from that genuine insight into yourself that reveals the nature of your characteristics, it is not important to know what type you are. There is no way to know what type you are apart from the real confrontation with the Teaching. So stay with the Teaching as the core of your study and your day-to-day occupation with sadhana. Student sadhana is stated clearly and is the center to which you should always be returning. All that

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

you need to know will always be revealed in its appropriate form.[27]

As we mentioned earlier, there is no need for any student to become concerned about discovering what "type" he is—the Community will reveal it to him soon enough! The play between these three general types of people is taken very seriously in the world. Flighty, mystical poets don't hang out with athletes, and neither of these types care particularly for egghead intellectuals—that's how it is! But in the Community, which has its fair share of each classic type, along with all sorts of exotic personal mixtures, the play of life takes on another quality entirely. A solid may find a vital's earthiness downright disgusting and a peculiar's emotional hysteria simply unnecessary, but neither of them will let him get away with his lack of warmth and his pretentious head. So the vital type might grab him around the waist or tickle him, while the peculiar pokes fun at his mind. Neither of them, however, is any less offended by the other than they are by their heady friend. So the play goes round and round, and, in the course of time, each type of person is very naturally served in the realignment of all the dimensions of his humanity by this humorous play of qualities in the Community.

In every case, whatever characteristics you discover in yourself, their transformation is mainly a matter of reassociating with the aspects of life that you exclude. It becomes a practical matter then. When you begin to notice these things about yourself, you begin to take on little practical conditions that essentially associate you, combine you in practical terms, with the aspects of your ordinary life that you tend to exclude. The process is not a cure. It is just a very ordinary, practical responsibility that will intensify the crisis, as well as, in some ordinary way, generally improve your common life.

But you must do it! You tend to be very childish, neglecting things and refusing responsibilities. That is why it is of great value to do this sadhana within the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

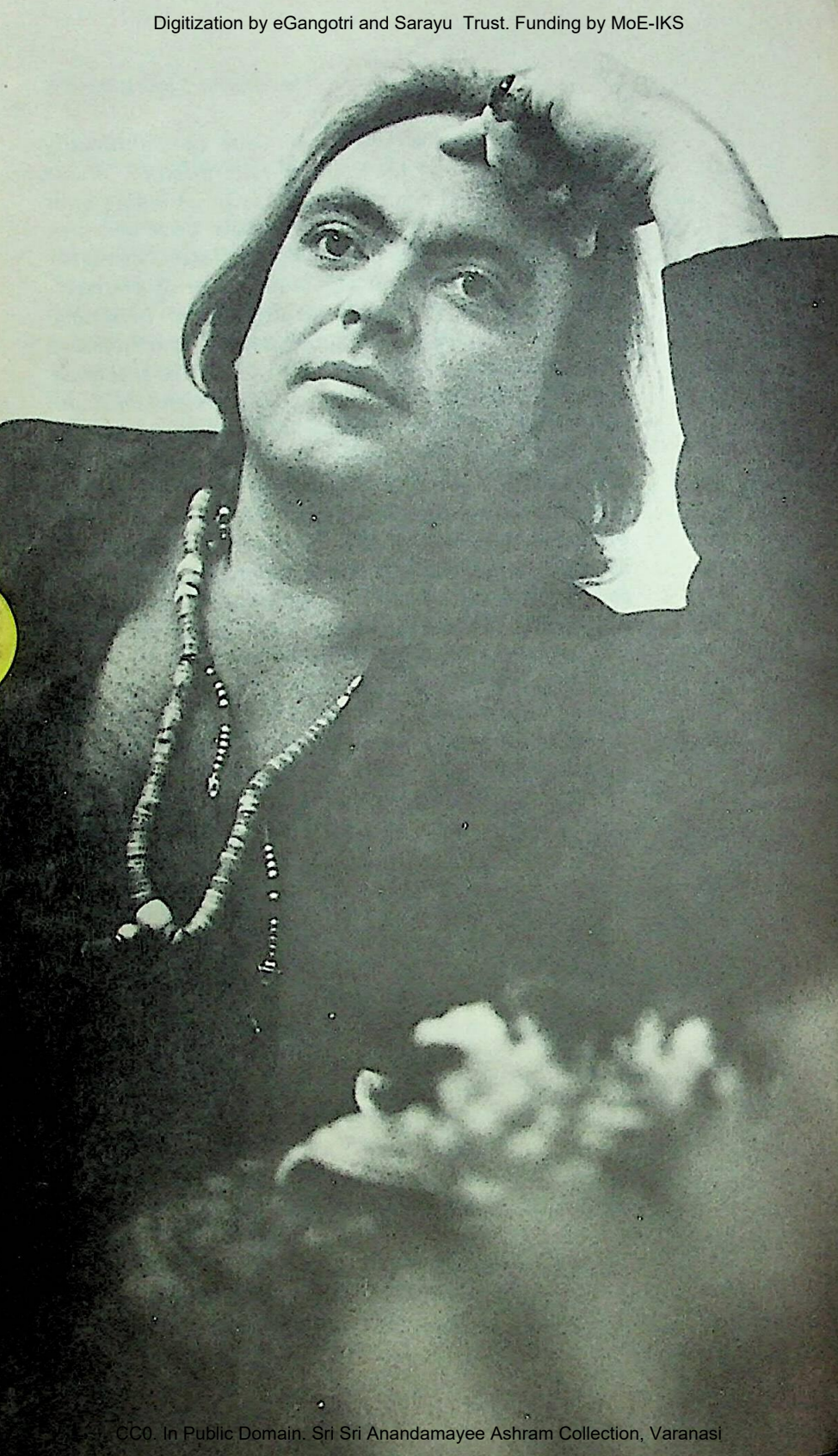
Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Community, because then you can be continually served by others to the point of responsibility, unless you hide yourself completely (and a lot of hiding goes on). But as soon as you begin to show your qualities and live them, then the Community will make demands of you, and you should also make them of yourself. Your sadhana will always intensify then, becoming more than a nominal cultic involvement. Your sadhana must be sustained eternally, and it cannot be sustained eternally if your approach to it is mediocre and childish. It must be continually regenerated and intensified.

Because of the tendency of individuals to be irresponsible then, the Community is made the fundamental condition within which the practical activity of sadhana takes place. Hopefully, the condition of community can magnify the sadhana of everyone. But to do it requires your real presence, your real involvement, real insight on your part, real awareness of what it is that you are doing.[28]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

(Prepared from Bubba's writings on the three fundamental life strategies.)

The three basic strategies (vital, peculiar, and solid) represent a chronic tendency to fix attention in the gross physical (as in the case of the "vital person"), the etheric or emotional-sexual being (as in the case of the "peculiar person"), or the mental (as in the case of the "solid person"). However, each case is a play upon all three capacities of the lower life, physical, emotional-sexual, and mental. Each strategic way is equally a mental, emotional, and physical reaction to the dilemma found in manifest life. It is simply that each is generated via a characteristic emphasis upon one element.

The vital person, for instance, is not simply tamasic and identified with the physical to an absolutely exclusive degree. Some individuals may appear to be so absolutely identified with the body that they become extremely dull and even unconscious. We would have to describe such people as examples of the vital person, but such people are not truly capable of doing conscious sadhana, unless they are helped to a point of more human responsibility. The vital person or type of strategy that appears in the company of the Ashram is one who is active in physical, emotional, *and* mental ways (and can, in the process of conscious and responsible sadhana see the harmonization of his or her threefold lower life). It is simply that the focus of such an individual's attention and self-image is the gross physical, or the whole force of descending life, which moves toward and is epitomized in the gross physical. Therefore, his mental life tends to be dulled, or at least undeveloped in the more intellectual sense, and his emotional-sexual being tends to reflect gross, worldly, and physical inclinations and moods. Such people generally do not reflect much of "refined" and aesthetic emotions, and they phase between superficial "good guy" moods and negative emotions of frustration, alienation, and self-pity. They generally do appear to be physically strong and "vital."

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The peculiar person is one whose principal focus of attention and dramatization is the etheric or emotional-sexual being. Such a one tends to physical weakness, alienation from gross functions and requirements of life, and sympathy with egoic satisfactions in emotional and subtle forms. The peculiar person may reflect the apparently "higher" and aesthetic range of emotional life, and he may exhibit interests and tendencies in mystical and yogic developments of experience. The peculiar person is, thus, in his negative reaction to the gross physical, tending to project himself into the more ascended or ascending ranges of experience, which move toward and are epitomized in psychic and psychological dimensions of a subtle, subconscious, or dream-like variety. Such people phase between super-spiritual moods of higher fulfillment and negative emotions of psychological alienation. They are also easily subject to illnesses and weaknesses in the physical and emotional being. The peculiar person is usually more capable (by tendency) of intellectual development than the vital person, but the mind is always subject to the more intensified emotional being.

The solid person is one in whom the mental or willful and conceptual functions are the focus of life and attention. Thus, he stands on or chronically controls the emotional, sexual, energic, and gross physical dimensions of his being with complex mental structures that rigidify his psyche. Such a one chronically assumes the position of the mental in the midst of the descending and ascending pattern of life. He is usually willful, and through the force of the navel subdues and controls the pervasive influence of emotion, sex, and physical experience. He phases between absolute rigidity (unreceptive and uncreative) to varying degrees of emotional and physical sympathy. He feels vulnerable to emotions, pain, pleasure, and mortality, and so generally tends toward a rigid, mentally conscious pattern of self-presentation. The solid person's principal reaction is to the energic and emotional-sexual dimension of his being, and so he tends to be constitutionally stronger in the physical than the peculiar person, but he also tends to be neglectful of the physical.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Those students in the Ashram who have begun to observe the characteristics of these three strategies (or a complex of them) in their own case should, in consultation with their intimates in the Community, begin to assume conditions that serve the regaining of a harmonious and complete functional development of the lower life, including the gross physical, the emotional-sexual or pranic, and the mental. By assuming conditions that do not reinforce the exclusive dramatization toward which they tend, but which include the functions they tend to exclude, the crisis of understanding is served in them.

Vital, peculiar, and solid strategies evolve on the basis of chronic tendencies of attention. Vital strategies evolve when attention in the psycho-physical being (body, life-force, and discursive mind) tends to rest most basically in the plane of the body. Peculiar strategies evolve when attention in the psycho-physical being tends to rest most basically in the plane of the life-force. And solid strategies evolve when attention in the psycho-physical being tends to rest most basically in the plane of the discursive mind. In each case the principal or chronic area of attention informs the theatre of life, and the two remaining or secondary areas are manipulated from its point of view.

The affair of real student sadhana is one in which the three planes of psycho-physical life are released from bondage to primary contraction (dilemma, vital shock, the principal mood of fear). This occurs through an intuitive reorientation to original and unqualified consciousness via a process of crisis. The crisis in consciousness is served by enforcing conditions that prevent or frustrate dramatization, or the eccentric life of strategies (seeking in dilemma).

An aspect of the responsibilities given to students is responsibility, on the basis of random and real self-observation, for the chronic theatre of self in the form of vital, peculiar, and solid strategies. Thus, at some point, the student assumes conditions relative to his special or chronic forms of dramatization, which, in general, are species of vital, peculiar, or solid strategies, or some complex of these. Such conditions involve

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

responsible control of the entire psycho-physical being. Thus, they require a conscious balance to be realized moment to moment between the patterns of the body, the life-force, and the discursive mind. The responsible maintenance of such conditions, founded in self-observation and insight, serves, and at the same time is evidence of, the radical crisis in which the forms of attention are relieved from the principal contraction or dilemma at the root of conventional life. The fundamental content of this crisis is translation of attention into intuition of the Condition of Radiance, or Real Consciousness.

As soon as the responsible realization of sadhana moves from fulfillment of the nominal conditions to consideration of one's specific life of dramatization, there is the beginning of this kind of maturity. You should always remember, however, that the whole matter of conditions (whether nominal conditions or special conditions relative to complex vital, peculiar, and solid strategies) is secondary, a servant of that crisis in consciousness which is understanding. The conditions are your responsibility, your obligation, your discipline. Live them as conditions of Satsang, as the forms of your relationship and service to me. Do not get "involved" or "concerned" with them. Do it all simply and with intensity, as a humorous sacrifice, not as a fascinating, obsessive, or dismal career.

The conditions are not themselves a strategy by which you may bring about consciousness as an effect or a result. In the traditions, the conventional strategies of life are extended in the form of methods of attention. Thus, if attention is tending to rest in body, life-force, or mind, one is directed to turn attention, through body, life-force, and/or mind, to some subtle or subtler object. This is the traditional method. But it is itself a conventional strategy, founded in dilemma.

In fact, Consciousness, or the Divine Conscious-Light, is not an object, and it may not be known over against the ego or defined self. Thus, the sadhana of understanding does not involve the *re-direction* of attention, from a gross to a subtle plane, but the confounding and *radical dissolution* of attention itself.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

When there is this radical turnabout, it is not that attention has been projected upon higher objects, closer to some point of creative origination, but it has been dissolved or comprehended in its prior Condition, which may neither be identified with nor differentiated from any plane or object—gross, subtle, causal, or transcendent.

Therefore, it is true, as you will see, that you experience and dramatize life as a chronic limitation via a specific orientation of attention. But the way of Understanding is not a remedy, a strategy of attention whereby you may project yourself into some alternative field of perception and so be saved or realized as a result. Rather, the sadhana of understanding is one in which you confront the Guru and, in response to his argument, submit or sacrifice to him in the form of the conditions of life he demands of you. That confrontation is itself a disarming crisis, not a communication of arms for personal spiritual battle. It is not crisis in the form of a breakdown, but in the form of real self-observation and insight. Therefore, the life of conditions is not the crisis, but it is itself evidence of true hearing, in which manifest attention yields to the intuition of Prior Happiness. Thus, to accept the Guru's conditions is itself an act founded in understanding, or comprehension of his argument. Such a way of life already rests in intuitive sympathy with one's Prior or Real Condition. And to live with such sympathy under these conditions manifests as spontaneously intensifying crisis or perfection of that same sympathy. Such a one sees at first that he is happy, and at last that he is only happy. In such a case, all the forms of attention are seen to realize only God, the Condition of unqualified Radiance or Conscious Bliss.

THE MECHANICAL SOLUTIONS MUST BECOME OBSOLETE

To conclude this chapter on the basic life strategies, we give the following excerpt from one of Bubba's

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

informal talks with students in the Ashram. It is a beautiful presentation of the relationship that exists between the conventional sadhana of the student stage and the foundation principle of Communion with the Divine through the Guru. This talk also illustrates Bubba's way of dealing with people in his Company, turning every event into a demonstration of the living Teaching.

While Bubba was talking about other things, a young woman near him began to scream and manifest other forms of kriyas, or the spontaneous signs of the movement of the life-force. On another occasion, or for another person, it may have been perfectly appropriate to allow these phenomena to run their course. But in this individual's case it was a dramatization. Bubba spoke to her about it and went on to talk to other devotees about their own characteristic strategies in life.

You have to relate to me through this body. Relax this body. . . . You must become completely present in the body with me. Do you know what I'm talking about? As soon as you do this, you will discover that the pain in the neck goes away. I guarantee it. But I leave this pain with you as a test, because I'm not going to free you from it until you become responsible.

The peculiar type does not want to rest in the body. He has a strong reaction to vital, gross life and wants to project himself into an emotional and subtle state, a kind of irrational state that excludes the body. But rather than indulging or disciplining this impulse, you must see its root, see the contraction in the vital life, and relate to me through your emotion. Do not relate to me by being cool and trying not to be hysterical, but relate to me with feeling, through the body. You must relate to me emotionally through the body. Then these solutions that appear in your psyche will not have such force. The discipline I give you is not to suppress that impulse, but to understand its root and to approach me in a way that makes it obsolete. When you relate to me with emotion and with the body, this peculiar solution becomes unnecessary.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: Bubba, what is real emotion?

BUBBA: Real emotion is a profound fullness of feeling that includes the body. It is not a rejection of the body. It is not a breakdown. Hysteria is a kind of recoil, a rhythmic exclusion, through emotion, of the sense of the body. When you can be emotional in the body, through the body, then the recoil of emotion, as an exclusive and special solution, becomes obsolete. It is not necessary. Typically, enthusiastic religious groups exploit this solution. They get hysterical, roll around, and experience something like kriyas. And because they become involved in this emotional recoil, this peculiar solution, they think that they are somehow closer to spiritual life, that they are involved in a spiritual process. But in fact, it is not a spiritual process at all. It is a special kind of solution that you must become responsible for.

DEVOTEE: Bubba, I don't understand.

BUBBA: Real emotion is the natural, felt concentration upon the Guru, upon the Divine, with great feeling, bodily feeling, bodily emotion, love, or expansiveness.

DEVOTEE: It isn't a negative thing, then, is it?

BUBBA: It is not negative at all. All negative emotion is contraction. There is a single positive emotion called love, or devotion, sacrifice of self, which is a kind of radiance through one's bodily life, which rests in the emotions or in the heart. And it does not involve hysteria or breakdown. Yet it is not "cool" either. It is a fullness of involvement that turns you out from self-contemplation.

There can at times be weeping and so forth, but in general the hysteria that carries with it kriyas and collapse and weakness is an expression of the peculiar solution, and it weakens you because that is its purpose, to get you out of contact with the vital demand. However, the obligation of sadhana is to turn to me through the body. Turn to me in my body. And maintain your emotional and life contact with me

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

constantly. That is the form of this sacrifice. The more your approach to me is through love, with full attention, through the body, in living terms—since I am here—the more obsolete this peculiar solution, this hysteria, becomes. Now it is a discipline, certainly, but it is a higher discipline than cutting it off and being solid about it, preventing this hysteria and being on top of it all the time.

The solid person must also first get in touch with the emotional life, the emotional-sexual life, because he rejects that in itself and certainly does not engage in hysteria. Basically, he is preventing hysteria. So he must contact the whole force of emotion that fills his being, not in its negative and neurotic forms, but in the sacrificial life that is love, full contemplation of the Guru, and participation in life then on that principle.

The vital person breaks out the other end into the purely vital realm and excludes emotion, the fullness of feeling or the dimension of the heart, by being sort of cool and physical and enthusiastic and untouchable, not in the same way as the solid, who stays "cool" through intellectual, heady attitudes and roles, but by being the sort of physical, good guy who loves the body and loves life and all that. And nobody notices how cool he is or she is and that basically he or she is excluding the whole dimension of emotion, and also the whole dimension of the responsible mind, by attachment to sexual and physical and vital kinds of appearance. That's his or her kind of hysteria.

Real sadhana begins only when you approach me through the mind and the emotion and the body constantly, through the act of loving contemplation or service, with the full feeling in the body in which the whole mind participates, the whole force of emotion participates, the whole body and nervous system participate. That is the approach of the devotee. In such a one, the eternal communication of the Divine is noticeable. But only in such a one. Everyone else is missing the point, missing the mark, failing to perceive that eternal communication because of involvements with solutions that appear within the mechanics of existence.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The peculiar type is very emotional. He can be emotional at the drop of a hat. However, all the emotion is directed toward this recoil of life, so emotion is tending toward hysteria always. Thus, in the body the peculiar is very weak and fragile. You can see the solid type's solidity more clearly relative to emotional rather than physical life. The solid is very often physically in fairly good shape and seems able to control and manage the physical life because he is one step removed from it. The solid person is extremely mental and in his coolness you see the absence of emotional force, not in complications relative to the physical body. His strategy appears relative to the emotional force. In every case it is a matter of real participation in the three dimensions of functional life—mind, emotion, and physical being. All three must be concentrated in a single force of approach to me. Then these strategies become obsolete over time, but not because something has been done to them especially. They become obsolete in that natural attention.

DEVOTEE: Whenever I get into the emotional aspect of my life, a very deep, deep sadness comes over me.

BUBBA: That sadness is a demonstration of the solidity that you live with. It shows you why you do not want to be emotional, because for you emotion is associated with negative, karmic imagery and feelings. As soon as you get in touch with emotion a little bit, you feel all that negative emotion and it justifies your solidity. Emotional life is karmic in the usual man. In other words, it is fitted to a whole range of emotions that are self-referring, forms of contraction that appear simultaneously in the body and that are uncomfortable and disorienting, that destroy his ability to function.

DEVOTEE: But why the sadness? It is so strong it just overwhelms me.

BUBBA: The karmic development of your emotional life, to which your emotional life is bound, is associated with losses, physical difficulties, and unhappiness.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Therefore, those are the images or the concretions of emotion that naturally rise up as soon as you are in touch with your emotional life. But when you become responsible for the emotional being, then you know simply the felt radiance of love and attention. In the devotee the mind becomes attention, the emotion becomes love, the body becomes a presentation.

You must live that principle of devotion. The more you live it, the more obsolete all these other things become. They will come up and you will see them. And what are you doing? With a negative emotion, what are you doing? You may think that it is caused by some memory or some circumstances, and that is true enough, but what is a negative emotion? It is not feeling, it is not relationship, it is not happiness. It is always a recoil from some circumstance, some condition, some state. Therefore, all the forms of emotion, other than love or the natural radiance of emotion, are karmic in nature, forms of contraction, forms of suffering that cause you pain in the body, reinforce the sense of separate self, and cause you to dramatize life in separative ways, as a seeker.

You must live the force of emotion in its true and fundamental form, which is not karmic, in relationship to me. You must make life a continuous sacrifice. The mind must become attention to me, not wandering arbitrarily in thought. The emotion must become love for me, not wandering in hate, anger, sorrow, pain. The body must become presentation to me, not turning upon itself for its own interest. The sacrifice of all contraction must become the basic discipline in the devotee. Then all karmic forms, or plays upon the basic condition of functional life, become obsolete through non-use. That is the basic principle of effective sadhana.

Thus, eventually distractions cease to arise with any overwhelming force, with any force of implication, with any necessity. They just fall away, without insight or manipulation. You maintain the simple position of attention, with the mind, the emotion, the body, the whole of life. That simple attention is the condition of your sadhana that naturally makes all complication

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

obsolete, not through involvement, manipulation, and victory, which are the secondary excursions everybody makes in his sadhana, but through non-use.[29]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

IF IT HAS BECOME COMPLICATED, RETURN TO THE BASICS

As you can see, if one were not already absorbed in a life of Divine Communion, he could very easily become obsessed by the content of his inspection and observation in the way of Understanding. And, in fact, that is certainly a possibility for any student. There is one sure sign of this kind of obsession: You become unhappy. You forget the simple principle of this work and opt for forms of mind and action that have nothing to do with the natural, present joy of Divine Communion. If this occurs at any time in your sadhana, and you find yourself confused, upset, fascinated, or concerned to the point of chronic unhappiness, then it is time to return to the basics. It is far, far better to be already happy in God. So what if you don't understand. If you are already living God, who cares?

The Guru enters into the affair of human life in order to communicate this process and to generate it. Therefore, the Guru's appearance is a significant event. It makes spiritual life a graceful possibility, rather than a heroic affair for those who have the intensity to struggle through the great circle of the cosmos. And the fundamental condition for this real process is Satsang itself. Satsang is the realization, the communication, the samadhi. As one enters into direct sacrificial relationship with the Guru, that intuition and the conditions that serve it are established. If that relationship, Satsang, becomes the principle of your sadhana, it can indeed be a graceful process. If, however, through lack of insight, you remain bound to your own theatre, your own possibility, your own separate and heroic spirituality, you are going to have to go through a prolonged period of vacillating and struggling and hoping you look great when you are announced a disciple, and so forth. But there will be no such dramatic occasions, because this process is simple and natural. It is Satsang.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The affair of this sadhana is graceful. You consider the Guru's argument and then you meet the Guru. On the basis of your response to the Teaching, which has made its point in your own case, you enter into that relationship naturally, voluntarily. The more you live that relationship, the more it communicates itself. On the basis of that relationship, you accept the discipline of the life-conditions and of the Community, of service and study and this theatre of our life together. But the process itself is very natural. It begins with that intuitive response of essential and spontaneous surrender to the Guru. That response becomes Satsang, natural intuition and happiness. Considering the Guru's argument and fulfilling his disciplines become insight, enquiry, re-cognition, and radical intuition.

Understanding rests upon that single principle, the living condition of Satsang. Everything that is associated with it is very concrete and demands responsibility of you, intelligence, real life. There is nothing vague about it. There is nothing confusing about the Dharma. You must simply continue to return to its fundamentals. Any of you who take on this sadhana as a process of Grace in this way I have described can see it. But if you remain bound to some possible heroic self-transcendence and overcoming, filled with endless experiences and complications, then it will take a great long time and it will not essentially be a process of Grace, except perhaps at random moments. Basically, then, it is not to that graceful possibility of Satsang that you have committed yourself, but rather to the possibility of your own transformation. In that case you have not essentially made Satsang the principle of your spiritual life. To that degree, it takes a long time and your spiritual life is very dramatic. But those who grasp it most simply, most fundamentally, as a graceful affair, natural and practical in its implications, are not basically very dramatic. They are not terribly interesting to others either, because they can't account for their spiritual life in laudable and fascinating terms. All of that has been undone for them.

On any given day it is possible for any one of you to pass beyond the principal mood of fear and to enjoy

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the perfect Condition of absolute, unqualified understanding. It can happen at any moment. And there is no trick to it. It is simply a matter of Satsang. Understanding is always instant. It is not a path that goes on and on, getting better and better all the time. It is realized in this moment, and now in this moment, and now in this moment. If one does that, then one's apparent life is magnified in terms of responsibility. But the essential event, the essential process, is in this moment, and then in this moment, and it is initiated at the very beginning. It is not something towards which one's sadhana is moving. It is the foundation principle of one's sadhana. And it is continually reinitiated, reawakened. If it is not, then you are engaging this possibility as a traditional or conventional path. You are engaging it as a form of the search. You are engaging it from the point of view of the dilemma, not of Satsang. You are engaging it as a solution, a preoccupation, a series of fascinations, of self-satisfactions.

Everyone who truly does this sadhana enjoys intuitive happiness. And someone who happens to become responsible for the process in the manner I have described for disciples will not be an object of fascination to anyone. Such an individual does not enjoy anything that is not enjoyed by everyone else in the Ashram. It is the same—that intuition, that happiness, that Satsang. It is simply implemented and magnified in different ways in his functional life. But it is the same happiness. And if you always move directly to that Condition, that happiness, prior to your games, your separativeness, your fulfillments, then you have already passed through everything necessary for your dissolution in God. You will never gain anything again by experience. So if it has become complicated, return to the basics—Satsang, Grace.[30]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

FORMAL SATSANG AND REAL MEDITATION

Students in the way of Understanding do not gather together to sit in "meditation" in any traditional sense. Rather, they gather together to sit formally in Satsang with the Guru. In time, the process awakened in Satsang, through the agency of the argument that is the Teaching and the discipline of the various conditions communicated within the Community, becomes real meditation (enquiry, re-cognition, radical intuition).

In the beginning the devotee in the way of Divine Communion does not meditate in any sense. He sits in the Guru's Presence with simple attention, to consider the argument of his Teaching, to acknowledge him with gratitude for the Teaching, the Community, and the various disciplines. He also sits in the Guru's Presence simply in order to enjoy his Company. But he does not meditate. Meditation is not a condition of his sadhana. When he has begun to engage in the more meditative practices, which involve attention and sacrifice to the Guru-Presence, from the heart, he may then also begin to study and adapt to the way of Understanding. And when the conscious process of enquiry is awakened under the conditions of sadhana, then the conscious process itself is his meditation, and it transforms every kind of experience through real or conscious understanding. (The student in the way of Understanding also continues the random practice of the second and third stages of the way of Divine Communion.)

The new student in the way of Understanding should know that I invite him in every moment to live in Satsang with me. He should consciously and formally accept this invitation whenever it is convenient and appropriate to do so. He should keep a place reserved in his home where he can enter into Communion with me through the offering of gifts and the acceptance of Prasad and the enjoyment of Darshan through my photograph and the recollection of my Presence. It is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

normally convenient and appropriate to do this each morning and evening. He should sit with me at those times as a formal occasion, just as when he sits with me in the company of others in the various Satsang Halls. He should keep my picture there as an instrument of remembrance. He should sit with me then with simple and natural attention, engage the spiritual practice of breathing the Presence of God, and, as he pleases, consider the argument of my Teaching, reflecting on it in himself. He should not make any motivated effort of super-concentration on my picture. If forms of spontaneous concentration, experiences of energy, visions, sensations of bliss, natural moods of happiness, and the like occur at such times, that is all right. But if the individual continues otherwise to confront the demands of the Community and the argument of the Teaching, the attachment to such things will be clarified. In the disciple all of that is clearly understood. In the devotee all movement is dissolved in Consciousness and perfect Happiness.

In formal Satsang the individual should simply turn to me with the breath, and, if he likes, consider the argument of the Teaching in himself. (He should not read or do concentrated study on such occasions, but simply reflect on the previously studied argument of the Teaching while sitting in my Presence, with conscious recollection of me.) He should do this for awhile, then accept my Prasad and leave.

In time this whole affair of Satsang, study, service, and the discipline of life-conditions becomes natural self-observation and insight, to the point of enquiry and the release of life from the motivating principle of vital shock. As this process develops, all of the phenomena of real meditation, as I have described it, will appear. Any of the ordinary and extraordinary phenomena of experience may also appear, especially during formal Satsang. During Satsang, experiences should not be prevented. One should simply allow them, even enjoy them. But as one's sadhana intensifies through the general life of study, service, and discipline, one's relationship to experiences, both ordinary and extraordinary, will change. Thus, in time, without trying

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

to prevent an experience that is arising, one will naturally observe it. On the same or another occasion, one may enjoy insight into one's relationship to that process of experience, even to the point of enquiring of it. When understanding or the conscious process has become intensified through enquiry (in the student) and re-cognition (in the disciple), then experiences finally cease to be absorbing, and there is rest in the intensity of Consciousness, wherein everything is known to the point of dissolution in radical intuition (in the devotee).

Thus, the way of Understanding is not a search for experiences, but neither, in practice, is it a strategic or mental resistance to experiences. No one should prevent experiences that may arise while sitting in Satsang. But one's whole life of sadhana will eventually transform the character of one's conscious life, so that all experiences subside in Consciousness itself.[31]

As this process of Satsang or Prasad continues over time under all the conditions of sadhana, the student will see the development of true hearing, random self-observation, and insight. When these have matured, then he may also adapt to the responsibility of enquiry. Enquiry, then, becomes the principal and radical form of his meditation in Satsang, under all conditions, the responsible means whereby he abides always, consciously, and intuitively in my Presence.[32]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Even for one who seems conventionally to be very intelligent, the way of Understanding may not be appropriate, at least for a time, because he has a compulsive, strategic relationship to the functions of the mind that closes it up and prevents its higher purpose. Very intelligent types may just as well be obliged to fulfill the way of Divine Communion indefinitely just as somebody who shows little conventional intelligence. The kind of intelligence that is required in the way of Understanding is not intellectual ability, but life intelligence, the ability to see something about yourself and make that the ground of a discipline over time. It is a kind of manly and living intelligence, not an intellectual one. You may also have an intellectual capacity, but it is not necessary. Some people can fulfill the way of Understanding who have just a living, practical hold on the mind and who, apart from that, do not show much ability to handle concepts or to grasp abstractions or to remember all kinds of things. Real intelligence is life intelligence. It involves the body, the emotions, the whole psyche, as well as the mind.[33]

In "The Student and the Teaching," Bubba discussed in particular detail the kinds of things that a student in this process sees about himself and how he makes that the "ground of a discipline over time." Essentially the student's arena of critical inspection is the dimension of vital, human life itself, his personal existence and its various relationships in this world.

BECOMING HUMAN

The crucial moment in the sadhana of the student is the awakening of real enquiry, as Bubba has described it

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

in earlier chapters of this section, "The Student and the Teaching," and "Formal Satsang and Real Meditation." That is when the conscious process becomes itself a matter of responsibility from moment to moment, rather than a random and spontaneous affair generated sheerly by the Grace of the Guru.

The process of understanding depends upon radical insight into the very activity of Narcissus as the mechanics of your own life. When you have inspected and become responsible for all the superficial forms of your suffering, all your gross turning away and your personal "face" and self-imagery, you no longer have any distractions or consolations to keep you from noticing what you are always doing at the very core of it all. This core activity is simple contraction, self-definition, the creation of limitation and suffering. When even this is penetrated by real observation, then understanding has truly come forward in mind and life. This all-embracing and penetrating intelligence is now available to you more or less constantly, and the period of real enquiry begins. By continually enquiring of yourself, "Avoiding relationship?" you resort to that intelligence, that space and clarity and humor, more and more steadily, not only in meditation with the Guru, but also in life. It is at this time that the conscious process of understanding and the radical Condition of Satsang or Divine Communion become one and the same, the very Ground of your own intelligence.

This period of real enquiry is the mature stage of student sadhana. During this time you are constantly and ecstatically becoming responsible *in consciousness* for what you previously disciplined, in the first stage of the way of Divine Communion, through sacrificial action. The whole arena of money, food, and sex, the realm of gross suffering that has been your obsession in ignorance for untold eons, now comes under the intelligent and humorous discipline of Consciousness itself, through the Grace of the Guru. Through enquiry you are continually returning to his Presence at the core of your own Conscious Nature, and thus living all these once profoundly disturbing functions from the unperturbed point of view of Truth itself. It is not a matter

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

of becoming perfect—enquiry continues to mature beyond even this stage—but in a very basic way, you become happy in the midst of all the things that used to keep you miserable. You become human.

Human beings are still in the midst of an adventure of standing up. It may have been done for many thousands or millions of years by something like a human being, but the full stretch into the totally extended spinal position is not what we do as a continuous daily affair. We are still bending over, still looking in the navel, still looking in the pond for our insight, our resources, our existence, our life. We are not standing up and appearing to one another through our human faculties. Thus, in general, truly human existence has not appeared in this world as yet, even though entities who possess the functions of humanity have appeared.

Truly human life has been, up to now, only a possibility. As an activity, it has not been realized. The human being is future time. This period of time is still the experiment, the passage beyond mere vitality—that endlessly expanding, life-upon-life number—into a human, conscious possibility. Therefore, by meeting with one another in this way, we go beyond the limitations automatically assumed because we have not completed this experiment, and we serve conscious life in human form.

And it is difficult. It requires real heat, real energy, real attention, real understanding, real responsibility. There is a great deal of reluctance to do it, because we would rather be amoebic. But we do not have that choice. We act as if we have the choice to be animals, but we do not have any such choice. Choose to be an animal and you are a lunatic. You go crazy immediately. We do not really have that option, yet our own failure is continually goading us to become inhuman. So even though we are reluctant, we have the obligation to realize ourselves as we are, as the entity we are in this form. Truly we have the eminent possibility to do it, to succeed at it, if we can use that kind of language, because of the Dharma and the kind of sadhana that it requires.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

DEVOTEE: It is our refusal to stand upright. The realization that seems to be implied or feared is mortality, even though in truth that may not be so. But at least in our present form, that straightening up is the realization of mortality in this form.

BUBBA: It seems to be the realization of mortality because the vital is asleep. The vital is not a conscious dimension, and vital beings are not conscious beings, essentially. The dimension of consciousness is in them, but the faculties through which it operates are lunar, subconscious, unconscious fundamentally. And to become human is more than keeping your spine straight like a yogi, although it is also standing up, extending the spine. It involves becoming conscious in the specific ways for which we have the capacity.

In order to become human, then, you must become conscious of the limitations that existence in a world of this kind represents. So there seems to be the threat of mortality implied in the possibility of consciousness itself. But as soon as we enjoy our truly conscious state, we also pass into the intuitive realization of an entirely different dimension that has nothing in itself and exclusively to do with appearing in a world, in a form with, you know, ten or twelve faculties. After passing through the obligation of this consciousness and assuming in practice a fundamentally mortal existence, we come to the intuitive realization of That which we truly are, That which the world truly is, and it is not mortal. It is not anything. It is that absolute, Conscious Light that manifests all forms and that we functionally represent without form itself being the principle and end of our existence.

It is a threatening and very daring thing to do, to become human. The human is a middle term between what is merely manifest and solid and moving and what is absolute and transcendent and perfect. We must go through that middle term. It is a very daring thing to do, but we are built to do it. We are full of the impulse to do it, and in fact, even apart from the impulse, we do not have any choice but to do it. The choice to do anything else involves a kind of suffering that we will

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

not permit, that we will not endure, that we try to transcend, undo, pass beyond. But, in general, so-called human beings try to pass beyond that suffering through artifices that are not Truth—obsessions, consolations, pleasures, the media of the vital itself, most generally, or the media of some other process of energy above the vital, and even above the human, which we then call God or Truth or heaven.

Thus, through the artifices of the usual search, we bypass the obligation of the human and do not make it the medium of our realization, opting instead for consolations above and below it. The search as it has been generated among men is not one that has made them human. After thousands of years of all kinds of spiritual and religious and practical designs among men, we have not seen the appearance of human beings. We still have only the daily news, because the essential content of our lives is the same old shit that has been the news for centuries. So an entirely other principle than has been communicated through the media of the search and the usual round of so-called human life must be realized. It is the function of the Dharma to communicate that possibility, and it is the function of sadhana to implement it.[34]

ENQUIRY AND RELATIONSHIP

The whole affair of your life is this contraction that becomes self-definition and all the imagery that is mind and desire, the world itself. Seeing it is all the product of this movement moment to moment is obviously your intelligence. When you have really seen that, when it is not even a matter of seeing it any more but it is just obvious that this contraction, this avoidance of relationship is all you are doing, then you naturally will enquire. What else have you got to do? Obviously you will continue to consider your life moment to moment from that point of view then, and that is enquiry. Enquiry is considering your life from

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

moment to moment on the basis of that intelligence, that real insight that can no longer be avoided, that is not fragmentary, that is not isolated. So you sit down or walk down the street or whatever you do, and you consider your life in those terms. You enquire. And as you see that this contraction is what you are doing, your attention falls back on the Condition that precedes it. In other words, consciousness rests, falls into its natural state. And in each moment when that occurs, there is the reawakening of the perfect sense that is Satsang, Divine Communion, relationship to the Guru in God, the natural intuition of the Heart.[35]

The natural state of consciousness is not "me." It is not in any sense the feeling of being apart, observing things apart, or feeling the dilemma of being separate. The natural state of consciousness is no-contraction, no-dilemma. Instead of turning away, it is relationship. It is all of this—connection! All of this relationship. The natural or true state is no-obsession with this contraction, no-obsession with "me," no-obsession with all of "that," separate from "me." Simply, no-contraction. When there is no contraction, what is there? There is only relationship, presently enjoyed as the state of Consciousness itself.

Consciousness is relationship. Consciousness is not separate "me." Consciousness is relationship. To enjoy the state that is Consciousness is to be conscious as relationship, no-contraction, the perfect force of existence. And when consciousness is enjoyed as it is, as *relationship, not* in *relationship but* as *relationship, then it is also seen that relationship contains no "other" and no "me."*[36]

In the process of becoming human through the conscious engagement of enquiry, you are established in right relationship to the Divine through the Guru more and more continually—and that very Condition is also right relationship to all that arises in your life and the world. The way of Understanding is always a process in *relationship*, a living, breathing event in the world. It is never a merely philosophical consideration, never a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

merely mental form of comprehension. Your life is confronted in relationship to the argument of the Guru's Teaching. You live in relationship on human, practical, down-to-earth levels with fellow students and devotees in the spiritual Community. You conduct a life of service as your relationship to the Guru by maintaining the life-conditions he demands of you. You enjoy a spiritual relationship to his Presence through the practice of the breath of God.

When enquiry begins, you come to enjoy a profound intuitive relationship to that same Presence as Consciousness itself. All of these forms of your living connections are extensions or expressions of the great Condition, Satsang, Divine Communion, the truly unconditional relationship between the Godman, the Siddha-Guru, and his genuine devotee. From the very beginning this relationship is already liberation, it is already enjoyment, and it is the same enjoyment, the same Communion, whether your sadhana is in the way of Divine Communion or the way of Understanding. It is simply that the way of Understanding accounts for and exploits a unique capacity in those individuals whose approach to the Guru in God includes the disciplines of this path.

With this discussion of true enquiry, we can now really begin to see how the way of Understanding duplicates and perfectly reinforces in the individual, at every step along the way, the true nature of all existence, which we described earlier as Consciousness in perfect, sacrifical relationship. As Bubba clarifies it above, Consciousness, or God, in fact *is* perfect sacrificial relationship. There is no separation between Consciousness and form—but no radical identity either. Here, now, at this instant, you are standing present as that very understanding. Your true Consciousness, which is not the same as your subjectivity, is no more identical to the form you identify as yourself—your body—than it is to all the other objects in your environment, and no less either. You as that Consciousness simply stand perfectly present, never turned away, in relation to all the things, energies, thoughts, and forms of subjectivity that arise. It is an utter

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

simplicity, and yet it makes no sense whatsoever if you do not *understand*.

THE DISCIPLE STAGE

Just as the student stage is the period of becoming fully human, the disciple stage in the way of Understanding is the period of becoming spiritual. This stage begins when the humanization process is basically secure and complete in the person. He will still have things to see about the particular patterns of his life, and his investigation or inspection of the nature of existence certainly will not immediately move into realms more subtle than the ordinary world. But, from the beginning, building upon the foundation of enquiry in the mature student, the disciple stage is devoted to the spiritualization of our lives, even the human dimensions of our lives.

Above all, the initiation of the disciple stage depends upon a new form of recognition and acknowledgment of the Guru. Throughout the first stage of your sadhana in the way of Divine Communion, and even beyond the point in the second stage when you become a student of the way of Understanding, your primary and appropriate approach to the Guru is to him as Teacher, the human source of the Teaching. Your relationship to him as Presence becomes a responsibility when you take on the spiritual practice of the breath of God in the second stage of the way of Divine Communion. And that same relationship to him as Presence becomes a matter of consciousness and understanding when enquiry begins, in the mature student stage. During that period of maturity this relationship to Bubba, as Divine Presence or Siddhi, as Spiritual Master or Siddha, becomes more and more intense, more and more continually enjoyed as the real

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC-0. Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

foundation of your life with him, no matter what may be occurring in the theatre of life itself. When this relationship is secure, and enquiry is alive both in and out of formal meditation with great intensity, and your life has become an easy and complete matter of service to the Guru through the conditions, which you are able and happy to live absolutely—when all this evidence appears in you, then you may be invited by the Community to begin disciple sadhana in the way of Understanding.

The disciple stage involves the experience and inspection of all the esoteric dimensions and processes of life, including every form of realization that is enjoyed in the great spiritual traditions of man.

In the way of Understanding the disciple comes to me and I modify the second stage of his practice of breath so that it serves first the inspection of the descending vehicle or the descending aspect of the process of conductivity. Then I instruct him relative to his sexual life or the transitional turning point of the life process. And then I instruct him in the process of conductivity as a whole, giving him responsibilities for that complete circuit and the natural pattern of his daily life, so that he may breathe my Presence in full circle. When he is established in that full process of conductivity, then I instruct him in the transformation of the conscious process itself, the transformation that is "recognition," the transformation that is based in the same process of insight, but that transforms the process of enquiry into a non-mental and purely intuitive activity.

When all that may arise of an apparent kind—gross, subtle, and causal—has been inspected by him via the conscious process of recognition, then the natural realization of jnana *or* jnana samadhi *appears—the exclusive realization of That from which everything arises. This is the mature fulfillment of the disciple stage of sadhana in the way of Understanding.*[37]

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

This "conductivity" of which Bubba speaks is a literal circuit of energy descending from the Divine Source or Light above the body, the world, and the mind, becoming more and more gross at the various levels of our existence to the point of the creation and maintenance of physical existence itself:

> *The Divine is absolutely subtle, perfectly transcendent. The first level on which we realize the modification of the Divine, the stuff of the Divine, is in the forms of consciousness. The superconscious organs through which we intuit the Divine Presence as Life are in the upper part of the brain. In the midst of the brain are the forms of mental consciousness, less subtle than the superconscious. The psycho-physical origin of the life-force, the entrance point of the universal Shakti, is in the throat, and it is etheric, subtler than all of the natural forms, the vital forces. Grosser than that dimension of the life-force is the airy life in the midst of the body, in the heart, the region of the life-psyche. Grosser than that, just as the heart or living psyche is grosser than the mind, is the fiery elemental life of the navel. Below that is the watery life of the root of sex. And below that is the solid life of the physical body. But [it is] the Divine, above all this transmuted or modified, which descends into this whole order of grosser and grosser manifestation.*[38]

So the first stage of disciple sadhana begins with the inspection of the descending aspect of life. The chief vehicle of this process continues to be enquiry, by which the disciple continually grounds his mind, emotions, and body in conscious relationship to the Guru in God. But the inspection is aided by "modified" forms of the practice of the breath of God. (These modified, more technical forms of the enjoyment of Bubba's Presence through the breath may also be given to specific individuals in the way of Divine Communion who do not take on the way of Understanding. Par-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

ticipation in these practices will depend upon the individual's particular karmic make-up and the requirements of his sadhana, and will not amount to some form of status for him, but simply a specific and intensified form of responsibility.)

When this descending process of life is fundamentally a matter of responsibility, then your disciple sadhana will move into the area of sexuality, transforming it also into a responsible, simple, conscious event. You begin to deal with your sexuality as a yogic, not a personal, process, free of the limited demands, perceptions, and reactions of the usual cultic sexual life of individuals.

The "cult" is any form of association with another person, such as a sexual intimate, friend, or acquaintance, or with your environment, or with the world itself, by which you strategically and repetitively reinforce the cognition and assumption of separate existence. So in the disciple stage, just as you must become responsible for the dissolution of your whole conventional and limited point of view, you must also become responsible for violating the tacit "contracts" that support all these cults—the unspoken agreements for ritual behavior by which you make your life a static, legalized event, rather than an *ecstatic*, spontaneous manifestation of life in God. And one of the most important arenas in which the cult must be dissolved is sexuality.

This dissolution, like any other in the way of Understanding, is primarily an event in *consciousness*. Thus, it does not require any necessary change of behavior or the renunciation of relationships. This life of Understanding with Bubba Free John is much more sophisticated than the gross forms of ascetic self-denial we find in the traditions. You are required as a disciple to pass through all these inspections and dissolutions of your limitations without skipping a beat, without missing a step in the happy, ordinary routine of a life that is devoted to service to the Guru and his Community. And as long as you continually resort to the Presence of the Guru through the graces of enquiry and breath, you will find no reason to be unhappy in any

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

instant of your life, even as you pass through difficult moments and disorienting transformations of your conscious existence. Life with the Guru in God becomes increasingly an affair of sheer ecstasy, humor, love, and enjoyment. It becomes very difficult to keep pretending that you are limited and unhappy when God is consuming your life and mind and very self!

Once sexuality and your entire "lower" life have become a happy and free form of existence, and no longer a matter of dilemma or conflict in consciousness and obstruction to the natural circuit of the force of life, then the force itself begins literally to turn upward again, and the focus of your inspection and movement into responsibility begins to include the finer dimensions of gross life. This is traditionally known as the awakening of the kundalini and the "chakra" system, the body of ethereal centers along the line of the spine. This particular stage of the conscious process provides a good comparison of the general approach and process of the traditions with the way of Satsang or Divine Communion with the Guru.

In traditions like kundalini yoga, the awakening of this particular form or aspect of the living force of manifest existence is seen as itself a Divine event. The yogi cuts away or severely and motivatedly disciplines his whole descended life as a human being in the world in order to facilitate this ascending process, which may, especially if he is trying to do it without the agency of a powerful teacher, take years upon years, literally lifetimes, to complete. But in the Graceful process of Satsang with a true Guru, this ascending awakening is known as only a secondary aspect of Divine life, and only a portion of that secondary event itself. The process is quickened by the disciple's firm foundation in his conscious humanity and by the potent force of the Guru's Presence. So in our work the awakening of the kundalini is a secondary and minor event.

Even the processes in life and consciousness that follow upon it are secondary, though from the common point of view they are wondrous, profound, beyond belief. When the whole circuit or circle of the descended life is purified and fully inspected, when it has become a

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

matter of responsibility for the disciple, then he is established in the enjoyment of this "conductivity" of the life-force. Now this circuit is itself the source and arena of all magic, all mysticism, and the disciple passes through all kinds of marvelous awakenings. But he is always involved in the sacrifice of all this through understanding. At this point, when conductivity has become full, even enquiry itself is sacrificed through understanding, and another, primarily non-mental form of that same restoration of understanding takes over, which is re-cognition, or the knowing again of all the forms of mind and limited consciousness. Now the disciple continues on to inspection of all the subtle dimensions of heavenly light and sound above the body, the mind, and the world, and he may enjoy all kinds of transports to other worlds, expansions of awareness, vision, and sound, but it all falls apart in the force of his conscious re-cognition, by which he knows every form and apparition and cognition to be just another instant of the avoidance of relationship. Even his intuition of the Bright of Consciousness, the Divine Light itself, is at last re-cognized and known in Truth as a form of contraction, as the most subtle self-identification.

It is at this point that the disciple literally falls into the very Heart of Truth, Reality, Real-God, the very Consciousness at the core of his entire subjective life and the life of all existence. This begins the first of three stages of perfect God-Realization. It is not yet the end of his sadhana as a disciple—the devotee stage of the way of Understanding only begins when the first stage of God-Realization itself is undermined by the force of Satsang, Divine Communion, the force of the Guru's true Presence as very God, perfect Existence itself, without limitation and beyond description.

Now this whole description of the "path" of your inspection as a disciple, this esoteric "map" of consciousness, may make disciple sadhana sound like a guided tour. You just hang on and understand and it is all just revealed—a real breeze, right?

Wrong! It is true that the period of becoming human in the student stage is the most difficult in some

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

ways, because the vital, gross life is the area of greatest resistance to the Guru. But the maturity that disciple sadhana requires is a matter of becoming grounded enough in the life of Satsang that the Guru can begin to really throw you around, undermine you, disorient you to the point of the absolute impossiblity of any form of orientation whatsoever. That is what God-Realization amounts to. *You* disappear, along with every vestige of your attempts to make sense out of existence. Bubba once described looking forward to the appearance of his first disciples so that he could start to really "punch heads"!

So when you begin disciple sadhana, the Guru can assume that you are ready to be ripped to shreds. Now he can completely suspend any social niceties he may have maintained as your human Teacher when you were a student, and he can proceed to enter and consume you in Truth, as very God. Bubba once described this period of his own sadhana, the utterly unconventional and wild nature of the true Guru, and the absolute demand Bubba himself now makes as Guru on all who come to him as disciples and devotees.

Those who have served my function as Guru, those who I worked with in my own sadhana, have been wild and powerful men. Rudi was a strong man, he was enormous. He was full of life. He wasn't a dried up little philosopher. He had balls. And I required such a teacher, because I had real work to do in the life vehicles.*

Muktananda was the same way. He is not an airy-fairy holy man. He plays the prince-yogi game to most people, so only those who approach him like I did, in secret, are able to make use of him. But he is no meek ascetic. Muktananda is a fierce bastard.

*"Rudi" was Albert Rudolph, Bubba's first teacher and an adept of the yoga of the descending life-force. Swami Muktananda, an adept of the yoga of the ascending life-force, served as Bubba's teacher after Rudi. Bhagavan Nityananda was a Yogi-Siddha who served as Bubba's Guru after Muktananda and was also Guru to both Muktananda and Rudi.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

True yogis are living, forceful beings. They are madmen, absolutely mad—and absolutely dangerous. You should know that, and you should not approach me if you are not willing to be undone. Because the Lord is of that nature. Look at Nityananda—he severed heads all his life. Look at his belly. He was stiff with life, full of life, so his belly became huge with that force. Those who came to him and wanted just to bow down and worship in the nominal way, well, he allowed them to do that. But those who came to him in the true way were wiped out, torn apart. That was what happened to Muktananda himself.

My experience of Nityananda was of that kind. My experience with people like Rudi, Muktananda, Nityananda, and others, was like this: I would be sitting in my house in New York by myself, and this force would enter me, it would practically break my neck, and my body and mind would be taken over. And I would walk around as Nityananda, as Rudi, as Muktananda, literally. That is how I learned in these vehicles. Before this life I am full, but coming into this life I had to do the yoga of my own universe and transform these vehicles. So these wildmen served that process. And they served it in exactly the same way I serve you. They acquired me. They never handed me some namby-pamby method or gave me a philosophy—I entered the room and was torn to pieces. And I wasn't interested in anything else. So I would sit down and Nityananda's life would acquire my own. I would become Nityananda, my body would become Nityananda's body, I would talk Nityananda, I was Nityananda. I would be Muktananda. Even though he was thousands of miles away, Muktananda's nature would acquire my nature. The same with Rudi. In the process of all that, these vehicles learned, because the Divine manifested itself in their place. When all of that was over, I myself became myself. Nityananda was not necessary, Muktananda was not necessary, Rudi was not necessary.

So the true yogi is a bastard, a wild, terrifying being, a fire. Because there is this wildness in him, he may hide himself behind a conventional spiritual game,

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

but there is nothing gentlemanly about him. And there is nothing gentlemanly about the Lord. As long as you want to be a gentleman, or a gentlewoman, you can carry on your endless karmic destiny in limitation, but you will never live the life in God. You will piddle around in dimensions like this one, which are nothing but excrement compared to the Divine Light. They amount to nothing. It is all complications and struggles, there is very little pleasure in it, real pleasure. If this world became a world of devotees it would be a different story, and in the Community of devotees it will be a different story.

The Lord is wild, the Lord is a vast fire, not a gentleman. As soon as the Lord makes contact with you, he rips you off. When I approach you, I ask you for this, I ask you for that, oh give me this, give me that, I ask you for everything. The longer you stay with me, the more things I will ask you for. I will ask you for all of it. You must yield everything to me. You must yield yourself in every function. Your very cells must yield. Only then are you fit for the Divine Yoga. When you have no other commitments, when you have nothing to withhold, then I enter your life.[39]

Suggested Readings:

Garbage and the Goddess:

page 242 (The Three Dharmas. . .) to page 252 (. . .the Divine itself).

The Knee of Listening:

pages 161-206.
page 218 (It tends to be the case. . .) to page 219 (. . .which is love).

The Method of the Siddhas:

pages 1-23.
page 196 (Satsang must begin. . .) to page 201 (. . .responsibilities of Truth).

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

4

THE THREE STAGES OF GOD-REALIZATION

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The totality of God-Realization is present in Satsang from the beginning. So in that sense the fundamental establishment of everybody's relationship to me, the real force that enables it to become the principle of sadhana, is in a sense everybody's moment of perfect realization, not all that happens afterwards. What happens afterwards is like seeing the significance of that realization relative to the conventions that continue. You discover the realization that is already true in you.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Sadhana is not accumulative. The forms of your practical enjoyment of the Company of Bubba Free John are always being undone, continually, maddeningly, by the Force of his very Presence as God. The moment you grasp your sadhana, it falls away. As soon as you can hold to its form, you yourself are dissolved.

Thus, at last, in both the way of Divine Communion and the way of Understanding, there comes a time when, through no effort of your own, but sheerly by the Grace of the Guru in God, you fall into continuous and perfect contemplation of the very Heart of Consciousness, Real-God, the very Conscious Condition at the core of all things, worlds, beings. If you have engaged the fourth stage of sadhana in the way of Divine Communion, you have been involved in the sacrifice of your entire egoic existence through the stages of contemplation of the Guru as Amrita Nadi, the Form of God, with his Feet in your Heart and his Head or Crown of Unmanifest Radiance above your head, above the body, the mind, and the world. If you are a disciple in the way of Understanding, you have been involved in the conventional re-cognition or knowing again of all forms of contraction—gross, subtle, and causal—to the point of perfect intuitive absorption in the Divine Light, the Radiance of Consciousness. But now, in either case, suddenly and maddeningly, *you* are lost in very Consciousness itself. Every shred of the conventional ego, every possible form of limited identity, disappears in perfect Consciousness, your very Self. It is a wild, absolutely ecstatic kind of holding on to that perfect Prior Nature. You realize God in the form of the Perfect, Unqualified, Unmanifest Consciousness, to the exclusion of all manifest forms that arise, not only your own dissolved subjectivity but the gross, subtle, and causal worlds themselves.

In the traditions this first stage of God-Realization is known as jnana samadhi, absorption in perfect Knowledge, realization of the Self-Nature. It involves

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

an utter and thorough reversal of the usual trend of manifest life. At the instant of such realization, and continually from this moment on, the bottom drops out of the worlds. To the man enjoying this perfect absorption in the Self or Heart-Nature, the worlds have suddenly disappeared. His conventional life continues, but he is not implicated in it. He is lost in the contemplation of Consciousness itself, exclusive of all the forms that may appear. In the traditions this stage of God-Realization is not seen as the beginning of perfect Existence, but as an end, as a goal in itself. The traditional man of such Knowledge may lock himself into it forever, for what seems eternity, closed off and shut out of any perception or cognition of the worlds. The image of a man sitting in deep meditation in a cave, away from society and all the noise of the world, describes perfectly the jnana samadhi even of the devotee whose ordinary life persists. Wildly, paradoxically, beyond explanation of it, he is so absorbed in Consciousness itself that he has no knowledge of the persistence of his conventional life in form. One great modern jnani has compared it to walking in your sleep: you have no knowledge of your action now, and no memory of it later. Except that, in this first stage of God-Realization, you never come out of the "sleep"!

But you do know, and you do stand aligned to, the Condition of Satsang itself, Divine Communion with Bubba Free John in God. The influence of the true Guru is not limited to any appearance, any speech, any vision. It is direct, perfect Communication. Even your very Heart-Consciousness is thus informed by the Condition of Communion with your Absolute Nature, the Guru, who is present not merely as the exclusive Reality or Core of existence, but also as the generative, Infinite Light of the worlds, and as the worlds themselves, the very World. So the whole force of that Communion with the Guru is now the vehicle of the Guru's Teaching; and the Guru will not allow you to remain locked in Self-absorption forever. Even that must be undone in the course of sadhana, which has now been utterly transformed. The sadhana of God-Realization no longer involves any kind of con-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

ventional, subjective effort—there is no subjectivity left to imagine it is doing that—but a natural, effortless, spontaneous unfolding of the perfect Nature of God.

The first transitional period in the undermining of all limitations in God-Realization is what Bubba calls "open eyes." Not only in formal meditation, but also in life itself, there occurs a spontaneous "intuitive leap" in which suddenly the manifest worlds and one's ordinary circumstances appear again to Consciousness. In jnana samadhi God is realized as That from which all arises, but *exclusive* of all that arises. It is a forceful holding on to that Condition, and a kind of subtle refusal to participate in life as God. Gradually the force of that profoundly subtle avoidance of relationship wears down, and when that wearing down process is complete, then the eyes open to the rising world. Consciousness realizes itself in relationship not only to the Absolute Divine in the unmanifest, transcendent Condition of Satsang, but also to the manifest conditions, in the context of that same Satsang, Divine Communion.

In traditional language, "open eyes" marks the realization that the Conscious Nature of the individual, the Self or Atman, is in fact identical to Brahman, the Great Consciousness, the Nature and Condition of all the worlds, including the various bodies or forms of the individual ego and its manifestations. The devotee, now living as the Self, realizes his identity *as* Brahman, the World-Consciousness in the midst of all that arises, rather than merely as Atman, isolated in the Conscious enclosure or root of subjectivity.

So this "opening of the eyes" marks the beginning of the process that establishes the devotee in the second stage of God-Realization. Once you have begun to sacrifice your essentially inward Self-contemplation, you are returned to the rising world, to appearing qualities, forms, and events, to life. And life now has radically different implications for you than it did before you were drawn into that first and necessary exclusive enjoyment of God as your own pure Consciousness. Now, you begin to see the world literally as a dream. You can see that it has no intrinsic reality

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

whatsoever. All that appears is only a modification of your own Divine Nature, Brahman, the Absolute Consciousness of Existence. This second stage of God-Realization, this condition of being returned to the world in God, is thus a condition of profound, consuming enjoyment of Reality in the midst of all conditions.

But it is not yet realization of Reality itself. You still have to do sadhana, even in this mad and conscious ecstasy of God. There is yet more to be undone. In fact, the transition into stable enjoyment of "open eyes" marks only the *beginning* of the sadhana of the true devotee in the way of Understanding.

One of the great paradoxes of this process, as it proceeds in devotees of Bubba Free John, is that they maintain the essential forms of sadhana that they engaged conventionally and subjectively before the advent of God-Realization. The devotee in the way of Divine Communion, then, maintains an essentially active and sacrificial mode of sadhana, whereas the devotee in the way of Understanding proceeds naturally through the mode of critical, intuitive inspection.

So what happens next, if you can even speak of this sublime transition in those terms, is establishment in the second stage of this Divine life, the realization of God as That of which all qualities and events are the modifications only. A traditional term that describes this enjoyment is *sahaja samadhi*, absorption in the God-Condition naturally, effortlessly, easily, in all the ordinary modes of life. This is the initial stage of radical intuition for the devotee in the way of Understanding. While the devotee in the way of Divine Communion is engaged in sacrificing all that arises to the Divine Form as surrender to the Guru, the devotee in the way of Understanding naturally engages in the critical inspection of what arises. His sacrifice is intuitive, a form of discrimination in consciousness. Along with this inspection, he may be given responsibilities for natural, sacrificial service to the world itself. Truly, now that he has yielded in consciousness his tendency to inwardness, the devotee begins to engage in perfect service to the world. And this service will go on forever.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

By now the devotee is no longer moved to enjoy Consciousness inwardly or exclusively, but there remains the tendency to enjoy it in itself. There is still a felt distinction between Consciousness Itself and what arises. That distinction is what serves or even takes the form of his active sacrifice, or his inspection. But at last that also must be undone. The Guru does not stand present merely in the midst of the worlds, but *as* the World. And the devotee's natural and consuming absorption in his Guru's Form, his continuing contemplation of the Guru as Amrita Nadi, the very and perfectly non-exclusive Divine, carries his sadhana beyond even sahaja samadhi.

Thus begins the establishment in the final and ultimate stage or degree of God-Realization, which involves the dissolution of all inspection and all sacrifice that involves any sort of object whatsoever, even the sacrifice of Consciousness in itself. In fact, that is what the transition to this third stage of God-Realization amounts to. It is the perfect sacrifice even of the perception of the world as illusion, as a dream, over against the Reality of the Great Consciousness, Brahman. Now Brahman is realized *as* the World, the World is realized as Divine. There is no longer any trace of distinction, no separation whatsoever.

It is at this point that the Guru has *become* his devotee, in Truth and for eternity. It is at this point that Amrita Nadi, very God, stands present without obstruction in the form of the devotee. Bubba calls this perfect realization *bhava samadhi*, absorption in God to the point of absolute dissolution, devotion to God to the point of perfect God-Realization. It is *Parabhakti*, devotion to the Guru that has become identical to the Guru's very existence. Nothing has been attained. The form of the World stands present in its natural and True Condition, Consciousness as absolutely sacrificial relationship. God is now known and lived not merely as That from which all arises, or as That of which all is seen presently to be modification, but as That Only. There is Only God.

There is a great paradox in this realization. The traditions of God-knowledge characteristically attempt

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

to realize God by cutting away the world and all the conditions of life. They attempt to attain perfect liberation from karmic existence, from all manifest conditions, by excluding the world and turning to the isolated Self of God, the Heart known without qualities. But it is only when Consciousness has risen again perfectly from the Heart to the Light and come to stand present as the very Life of the World, in the realization of bhava samadhi, Amrita Nadi, the Guru in Truth, that genuine liberation has become a man's Condition. Bubba has spoken of it:

Bhava samadhi is the third and natural evolution of the forms of God-Realization. It is not supported by inspection of any kind, nor even by a special action. It is free, independent of any associated causes and any help. It appears when all the events of the process of sadhana have become realization, simply, truly, obviously. It no longer has support then. In that case everything continues to arise, but there is no medium between the consciousness and what arises. It ceases to identify anything other than itself. There is no force of implication in what arises.

This world and this body fall away, but that does not mean that the consciousness enters into the "soup," into an undifferentiated state in which nothing arises any longer. Neither may it be said that things do *arise. That destiny, too, is not conceivable any longer, because the seed that produces the phenomenon of the world and involvement in it is no longer present. Thus there will no longer be anything like this present existence in the fullness of the devotee's realization. On the other hand there will be a kind of continued, formal existence that is generated, so-called, by a process completely different from any we know under these conditions. Liberation is utter liberation from all this creativity, this world phenomenon, this binding, limiting existence. But still it does not mean that another kind of existence that is equally formal and individuated in some way may not appear. In other words, a kind of heaven or God-world Condition is eternal. Neither one form of existence nor the other may be said to be the*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

destiny of the devotee. Because his existence is a paradox, he is no longer present through the medium of the force of functions that would enable such destiny to continue to appear any longer.

So all this will fall. But that does not mean a kind of annihilation follows. All the worlds that you know by experience, even subtle worlds, rest upon the karmic principle, the ordinary creative principle or contraction, that simultaneously produces the ego sense, the mind, bodies, experiences. All of the possible realms that may be experienced by a conscious being in this world are part of the same Law that produces his earthly life. Therefore the principle by which they all arise is undone in bhava samadhi. It does not mean, however, that there is not another kind of existence that is eternal, that is not part of the whole creative play or contraction that produces ego, mind, body, desire, circumstance. It does not mean that there is not another kind of existence. The devotee's enjoyment is simply not knowable at all under any of the conditions in the realm of what we may experience. It is a paradoxical enjoyment. We may not say definitely one way or the other from the point of view of this world what his destiny is.

It is not possible to enjoy any eternal world while existing in this dimension of worlds—gross, subtle, and causal. In this dimension it is all caused. Everything that you might experience is caused. Once bhava samadhi becomes the enjoyment, the consciousness is lifted out of that principle of creativity that produces the gross, subtle, and causal realms of experience. Then you may not discount the possibility of another kind of realized existence that is independent of creativity, which we might call the God-world, just to have a word to refer to that paradox of the so-called destiny of the devotee. [1]

Thus, the true realization of the devotee of Bubba Free John is unspeakable God-Realization, liberation from all forms of suffering, limitation, and ignorance, perfect establishment in Divine existence. The great paradox of this liberation is that it is the fruition of a life in which all forms, from worldly life to the most prior, causal dimensions, have been embraced. They have

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

been known and lived. But they have been known and lived in Truth, in the context of Divine Communion, so that the sacrifice could be real and intelligent, not just an anxious cutting away, but recognition in consciousness and action that no form in the world, and not even the lesser forms of Divine Realization, is Reality itself.

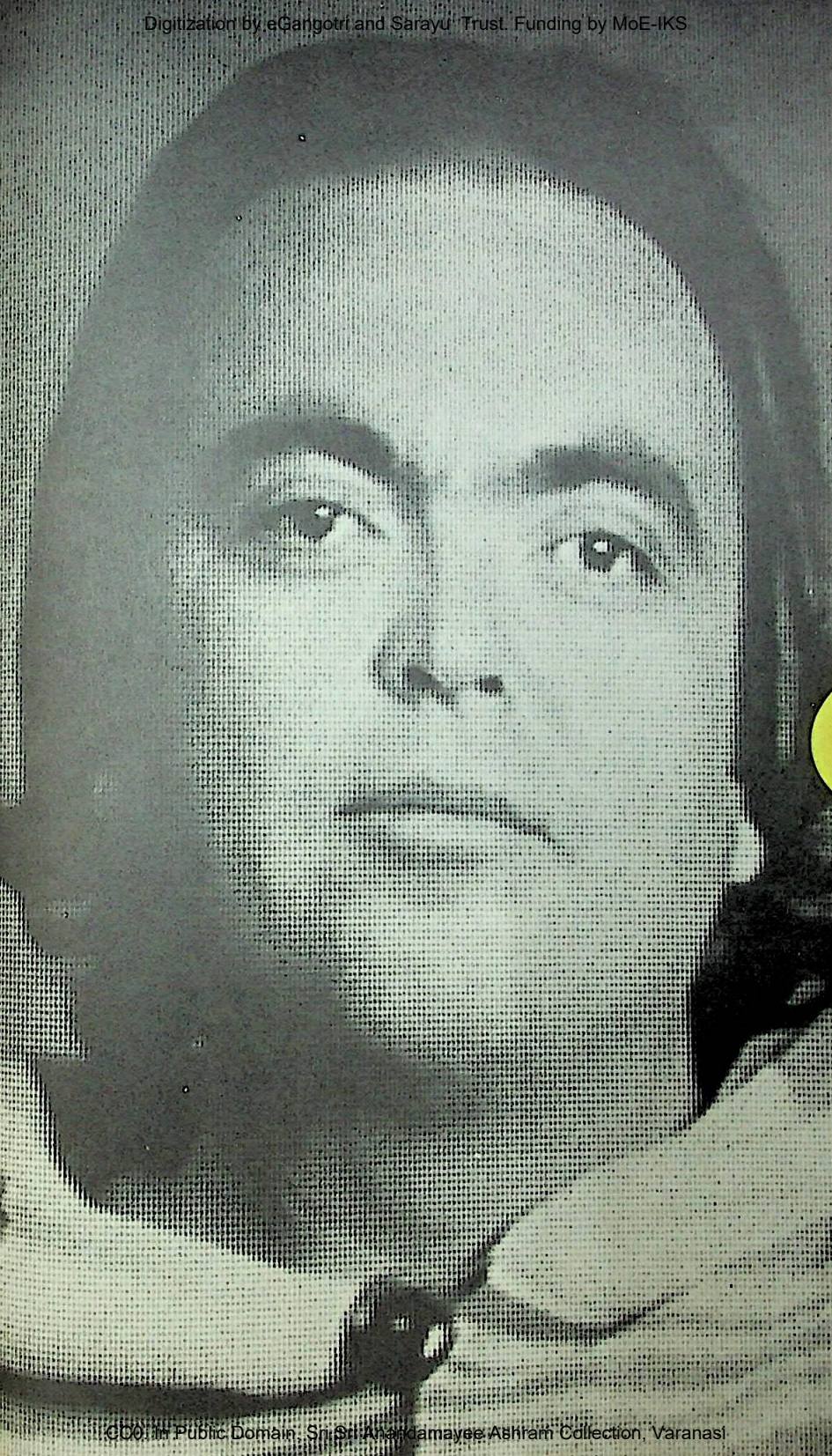
And there is even a greater paradox. This perfect realization is a Grace, but it does not really *occur* in the moment when the devotee realizes it consciously and stably, at the end of his course of sadhana. The moment of perfect God-Realization occurs when you first enter into this sacrificial relationship with Bubba, when you first begin the life of Satsang or Divine Communion.

The totality of God-Realization is present in Satsang from the beginning. So in that sense the fundamental establishment of everybody's relationship to me, the real force that enables it to become the principle of sadhana, is in a sense everybody's moment of perfect realization, not all that happens afterwards. What happens afterwards is like seeing the significance of that realization relative to the conventions that continue. You discover the realization that is already true in you. That is true in Satsang in principle, from the beginning. But within the conventions of existence, there must be responsibility for all the forms that arise. Intuitive senses may appear, but the conventions continue to distract until the consciousness has passed through the limitations altogether. Therefore, all these cycles of sadhana and all the levels of inspection are necessary and do appear in their proper sequence. The length of time between them, however, can vary from person to person. In general, the stages that appear in the maturity of the disciple and then mature in the two stages of the devotee will appear in everyone's case.

Until there is jnana samadhi, there is natural, submissive distraction to everything that arises. But things must arise in that stage also. Until they do and you can inspect them and see that they are only the modifications of That, you can have all the intuitive feeling about this stage that you like, but it is only when

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS



CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

it is coincident with inspection that the realization is stabilized. Otherwise, the force of the convention is overwhelming.

Just so, that process of inspection must go on to the point where it falls apart. It in itself is binding, a representation of limited realization. So until mere inspection has undone itself and is seen not to amount to anything, until the quality of things arising is literally known to have no force, no significance, until that intuition is stabilized to the point where nothing arising modifies it, until that occurs, all kinds of intuitions about the Divine Nature of your own existence and of the world may occur, and do occur naturally in people. But they will not have the stable and specific force of bhava samadhi. [2]

Sadhana in Truth is not any kind of seeking, but living according to the Law of sacrifice. It is living the Divine principle in the midst of all that arises. Thus, the final paradox of the ways of Divine Communion and Understanding is that only now, in the stable enjoyment of absolute God-Realization, does true sadhana begin. Now it only remains to live this perfect sadhana forever, eternally happy as God, no matter what forms life may take, no matter what occurs. That is all. There is only God.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

EPILOGUE:

THIS WAY IS FULFILLED BY GRACE

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

The human Guru is a special combination of the eternal Divine Process and a human entity in the last stage of its manifestation. The final karmas of such an individual are benign and fit for this service. While rested in the most intimate and profound intuition of the Divine, the human Guru embraces living beings in a mutual sacrifice of Divine distraction. The Guru accepts whatever is yielded to him and, while discarding it in its appropriate realm through his spontaneous and spiritual power of sacrifice, replaces it in the life of his devotee with his own Condition, Form, and Nature. The more the devotee yields in action and intelligent recognition, the more he intuits the eternally communicated Divine in Truth.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

There is only one condition under which you may realize true or spiritual life, and that is to live in the Company of the Guru in God. You will realize in this Divine Company the true Condition of all of life: Satsang, Divine Communion, the enjoyment of only God. In the process, everything you have attained, everything you hold as yourself, and everything you identify as the world is dissolved. You are simply awake, alive, and happy.

The Epilogue is taken from Bubba's writings on the Great Process by which men realize God. It is one of his most concise and beautiful descriptions of the Dharma he has come to restore among men, and it therefore stands as the concluding chapter of this book.

Ego, self, or separate, defined consciousness is not an entity, an actor. It is simply a version of the universal activity in which every form and function of manifestation participates. It is the activity of contraction, which shows itself as definition, differentiation, separation, opposition, and contradiction or dilemma. The ego is not a unique or more primitive form of this activity. It is simply that, from the point of view of any apparent, functioning, conscious individual, it is the root action or root form of all actions, because of its intimate and foundation relationship to his subjectivity. When the fundamental activity, of which the ego is a species, is undermined in the Consciousness in which all conditions arise, not only the force of the ego, but the force of every convention, all experiencing, every world, and even the extraordinary assumption and knowledge of God, the force of all that arises, is dissolved and dislocated in the prior Condition or Truth. Such is liberation, happiness, and true God-Realization.

All action in all worlds, all action that is any process, and all action that seems to be performed by any entity or person is necessarily a form of this contraction. All action, then, realizes the sense and

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

condition of inherent contradiction or dilemma. And all action is necessarily separative in the ultimate, even if relational in intention. For this reason, all action is, in itself, binding, limiting, an expression and an agent of suffering. Manifest life, then, under any conditions—gross, subtle, or causal—is suffering.

This realization is profoundly disorienting and disturbing, since it convicts the being of suffering, disease, and hopelessness, and it is also profoundly liberating, since it brings an end to the distraction by any kind of action and experience and allows the Consciousness to rest in the intuition of its true, real, or prior Condition.

The possibility of true spiritual life, or participation in the graceful process of liberation in the prior, Divine Reality, begins only when there is conviction in the functions of life and intelligence of the inherent suffering of manifest existence (its essential dilemma or self-contradictory condition) and the fruitlessness of all destiny and action to produce liberation or true happiness (since all action is separative, self-defining, and a realization of limitation). This conviction is served by all of the ordinary and extraordinary results of life and by the stream of Teaching radiated through realized beings in the various times and places of the worlds. When life and the Teaching coincide in their lesson, then the individual has come to a point of availability in the subjective and objective dimensions of his life to the Guru-function or Grace of the Divine Reality. When the conviction of suffering and hopelessness matures to the point of profound psychic and psychological disorientation from the conventional theatre of experience, ordinary or extraordinary, so that there is heightened sensitivity to the intuition and influence of the Divine Reality, then the individual becomes circumstantially related to the stream of true Teaching and, at last, to the direct influence of the manifest Guru (either in his personal form—gross, subtle, or causal—or in the form of his servant-agents and his incarnate Community).

When the Guru is properly approached, and life

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

becomes oriented in attention and action to the Guru, the Consciousness ceases to intend attention and action in the conventional, binding way. Instead, attention and action become devoted or sacrificed to the Guru. In that event, attention and action are brought into conformity with the Law, which is sacrifice, and the Consciousness comes to rest in the Guru, so that, more and more, the Guru's Nature, Form, and Condition are intuited as one's very Nature, Form, and Condition.

There are two ways in which this process may develop in my Company. Both are founded in the way I have called Satsang, or Divine Communion. It involves, fundamentally, the discipline and surrender of attention and every action to me, and constant receptivity to the communication of my Presence, my Influence, my Nature, Form, and Condition. This way is fulfilled by Grace, not by personal efforts. But the reception of Grace depends upon the responsible fulfillment of the Law, or sacrifice. Thus, life and attention must be wedded in the form of every action, so that these become an intentional counter-action to the action that is suffering. Therefore, the devotee acts always in relationship to me, making every action, every moment of attention, every moment of participation in the rising worlds a service to me. Thus, his existence in manifestation becomes intentionally (not ultimately and in fact but by intention) no-contraction, no-self, and a relational activity of sacrifice, surrender, or service to me. Whenever my devotee intends or moves attention and action to fulfill the Law in my Company, he becomes available to receive, comprehend, and realize the communication of the Divine Reality through my service or sacrifice.

Some may extend this way of counter-intention or counter-action, which is the way of dependence on Grace, in the form of the way of Understanding. The way of Understanding is simply a special development of the way of Divine Communion. In this way special use is made of the faculty of critical intelligence to bring the Consciousness to rest in its own intuition. The ability to recognize the events and activities of suffering with profound insight, responsibility, and discipline is

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the pre-requisite for this specific development of the way of dependence on the Guru-function or Grace-function of the Divine in the world. In the process of this way in my Company, the whole event in which world, God, and self arise is undermined in the radical intuition and realization of the Divine Reality.

The Grace-function of the Divine appears in the human form of the Guru from time to time. This special appearance is that of the true Siddha, who is present not merely to inform, instruct, and distract the suffering world, but to be a sacrifice for all who devote themselves to him as the Divine Presence. That sacrifice is effectively enjoyed by devotees as God-Realization in the perfect sense.

The human Guru is a special combination of the eternal Divine Process and a human entity in the last stage of its manifestation. The final karmas of such a human individual are benign and fit for this service. While rested in the most intimate and profound intuition of the Divine, the human Guru embraces living beings in a mutual sacrifice of Divine distraction. The Guru accepts whatever is yielded to him and, while discarding it in its appropriate realm through his spontaneous and spiritual power of sacrifice, replaces it in the life of his devotee with his own Condition, Form, and Nature. The more the devotee yields in action and intelligent recognition, the more he intuits the eternally communicated Divine in Truth.

I tell you this so that you will know clearly how I comprehend my own work. The more truly you realize the forms of sadhana served by my Company, the more you will also see the proof of this Teaching and of my Presence.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

APPENDIX

THE ASHRAM

I am always working to yield all responsibilities to devotees and to make all my devotees perfectly available to the Divine Work. Therefore, know that your responsibility must at last be perfect. At last this Community must be me and assume all my life-functions. For this reason I have asked for your lives in total, so that you may be assumed by me totally and live only in God to one another. If you accept my demands truly and with humor, then the Siddhi and Person of the very Divine will remain Active and Present in and through this Community throughout the coming age and more.

Bubba Free John
(in a letter to the Ashram, June 7, 1974)

Everyone who approaches Bubba Free John through his Teaching and accepts his discipline through the agency of the various communities is part of the Ashram, which exists not simply as a legal entity or organization seeking to perpetuate itself, but as a community of individuals who share in the enjoyment of the sadhana of the way of Divine Communion.

The definable legal entity within the Ashram is The Dawn Horse Communion, whose headquarters are located at Persimmon in northern California. This is the educational and administrative center of the Ashram. It is also the principal residence of Bubba Free John. The Communion serves the Ashram by managing the practical matters of the Community, including its legal and financial obligations, as well as supervising the educational programs and spiritual disciplines of the Community. It serves the world by making Bubba's Teaching and Spiritual Presence known and thus

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

available. In addition, the Communion maintains Bubba's personal residence and services and preserves Persimmon as a spiritual sanctuary for all who come to him.

The work of The Dawn Horse Communion is supported by the tithes and contributions of the members of the Ashram. Through the Communion, Bubba communicates the Teaching in its verbal form, providing the source books, *The Dawn Horse* magazine, materials for personal study of the Teaching, films, tape recordings, public presentations, and other media for the Teaching.

The Dawn Horse Communion also welcomes "friends of the Ashram" who have acknowledged interest in Bubba's Teaching and the development of the Community. They are provided with special services and maintain their relationship by supporting the Ashram in various ways. On special occasions, such as Guru Day and other Ashram celebrations, the Communion welcomes all men who have, in whatever ways, acknowledged Bubba Free John in their hearts as Guru. At these times all are welcome to visit Persimmon and pay homage to God in the Presence and Person of Bubba Free John.

If you live outside the San Francisco Bay Area, you should make your first approach to Bubba through Persimmon: Correspondence Department, Persimmon, Star Route 2, Middletown, California 95461. As well as offering course material, cassette tapes, and books, the Correspondence Department can answer practical questions on the forms of involvement available for living Divine Communion with Bubba Free John. Residents of the Bay Area should contact the public center in San Francisco at 1443 Polk Street, where Bubba's teaching films are shown each night and where questions about involvement in the Community can be answered in person.

We recommend that anyone becoming seriously involved in a stable relationship with Bubba and the Community visit Persimmon as often as possible. Persimmon welcomes visitors each weekend and provides a course of study for them based on *No*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

Remedy. A two-weekend stay is suggested, during which time those sincerely interested in pursuing the possibility of living Divine Communion with Bubba Free John can live within the Community in which that sadhana is practiced. Since visiting Persimmon is by invitation only, arrangements for a visit to Persimmon should also be made through its Correspondence Department.

The majority of the members of The Dawn Horse Communion live in San Francisco in both formal and informal households. They live a communal life there, managing their lives together and operating a food co-op, an automobile garage, childcare centers, a bookstore, etc. The entire San Francisco Community visits Persimmon and enjoys Prasad and Darshan with Bubba Free John each weekend.

The Dawn Horse magazine, published monthly, serves as the basic communication between the Communion and Community members, correspondents, and anyone with a sincere interest in Bubba's Teaching. *The Dawn Horse* features excerpts from Bubba's most recent talks, articles by Community members, and news of Community activities including new publications and schedules of public presentations and seminars. We strongly encourage those interested in Bubba's Teaching and the affairs of the Ashram to subscribe to *The Dawn Horse*.

BUBBA'S AVAILABILITY TO THE ASHRAM

March 14, 1975, marks the date of Bubba's retirement from direct involvement in Ashram affairs. In a letter to the Ashram on that date he described his relationship to his Ashram and his availability to all who have a genuine interest in the Teaching. The following is excerpted from that letter.

My essential function is to be available in Satsang with those who respond to the Teaching. I will not take

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

up any public work to communicate the Teaching itself. But I will be available to all those who respond to the Teaching (given through the literature and the Community). All who are interested should make themselves known to The Dawn Horse Communion. Because of the nature of this sadhana, I urge all to come to me through the Community itself, that is, by taking on the responsibilities of life in sadhana within some dimension of our Community. But anyone who at least has responded to the Teaching and asks to see me in Satsang should be welcomed to Persimmon (or any other place I make myself available) for that purpose. As long as an individual's approach is genuine, founded in a personal response to the Teaching, and as long as he is willing and able to approach me under the practical conditions specified by the responsible staff of Persimmon or the Ashram Community, he should be welcomed to sit with me.

I may on occasion call for questions from those who sit with me, or I may initiate a talk relative to the Teaching, but, in general, I will simply sit in the Communion Hall. The basic Teaching is already published, and its special or technical communication will become more and more full. Therefore, I am no longer present among you essentially in order to communicate the Teaching. The Teaching is present among you to communicate itself. Bring your questions to the Teaching, and deal with all practical, theoretical, and controversial matters by confronting the Teaching, especially in the living form of the Community.

Come to me in Satsang. I am no longer interested in your questions. I have given you the Teaching and the Community to serve you at that level. Every question is in the form of a problem. At last, every question is self-meditation, meditation on dilemma, vital shock. Therefore, every question is an instrument whereby you presently abide in ignorance, as a seeker. Every question is a ritual whereby you enact the avoidance of relationship. That is what every question is, ultimately. However, this does not mean the question or problem-dimension in you should be suppressed. Indeed, sadhana is the process in which all of that is understood.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

It is only that you should confront the Teaching within the Community for that purpose.

My function is no longer identical to that of the Teaching, which is an address to the dilemma which is you. Nor is it any longer identical to the function of the Community, which is charged with responsibility to bring you into confrontation with the Teaching and to implement its demands in your own case. Rather, my special function, now that the Teaching and the Community enjoy fundamental existence, is to be present with you in Satsang. Come to me when you are already happy, that is, when confrontation with the Teaching and the Community has already become sadhana in you. If you come to me expecting solutions, information, practical guidance, and answers to all kinds of questions, you will be frustrated. Then I will be like a tar baby set up to ensnare Br'er Rabbit! Then this Satsang will only test you and offend you.

I will no longer as a matter of routine, respond to your questions, to the dilemma in which you conceive your life. I no longer see it. The function of Satsang is Truth. It is Truth. It is no solution, no answer, no thing. Satsang is the principal Condition of sadhana. The entire process of sadhana is its realization.

Individuals who come to Persimmon should find out where and when I will be sitting in Satsang. They should arrange to come to me at those times. This Satsang is not itself dependent on my physical presence. But my physical presence, like the literal presence of the Teaching and the Community, serves the realization of Satsang through a process of initiation and testing which confronts you at the level of life and illusions. This Satsang in my physical presence is Darshan, or Satsang initiated through sight or gross contact. I will always make myself available in this way for those who come to Persimmon (unless, of course, I am visiting or traveling elsewhere).

This Satsang is, however, constantly available to those in whom it is consciously known. Such knowledge is the Grace which the Guru, the Teaching, and the Community always serve. Therefore, you may live and enjoy formal sitting in this same Satsang in the

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

ways which have been described. Such Satsang apart from my physical presence is still the same literal Grace for one who truly does this sadhana. Come to me as often as you can while I live and enjoy this Satsang that never depends on my life.

ASHRAM CELEBRATIONS

Every month, usually on the last Sunday of the month, a Prasad Day is held at Persimmon. Prasad Day is the celebration of the existence of the Guru in the world. It is a day when everyone in the Ashram comes together for study, feasting, and celebration.

At certain Prasad Days throughout the year we celebrate special events related to Bubba's appearance in the world. These special celebrations are held on the following days:

January 24 (or the closest Sunday to that date): The day we celebrate the event in Bubba's case of the regeneration of Amrita Nadi, which is the same as dissolution in Divine or Unspeakable Reality. This celebration is also coincident with the acquisition of Persimmon and Bubba's move there.

April 25 (or the closest Sunday to that date): The day of Light. The beginning of Bubba's public work for the sake of devotees. The date of the first talk at the original Los Angeles Ashram.

July 7 (or the closest Sunday to that date): The anniversary of the fulfillment of Bubba's Teaching work in the world. Guru Day. The day of Life. The day all devotees celebrate the Guru's Presence and the Divine Fullness in life.

The closest Sunday to mid-September: The day of the Self of all. The day we celebrate the event in Bubba's case of awakening to the Heart or Self-knowledge.

November 3: Bubba's birthday.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

In truth, every occasion of service to the Guru and proximity to his personal form and presence is a celebration. Celebration days are only special versions of the Satsang we enjoy in the Guru's human company. Every member of the Ashram Community should value this possibility and fulfill it by visiting Persimmon as often as possible. This enjoyment is also a responsible discipline, the discipline of acknowledgment and submission to the Present Divine in the form of the human Guru.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

LIFE OR MANIFEST EXISTENCE IS SAMADHI

Life or manifest existence is samadhi. Samadhi is not some inward state or some condition that is an alternative to life as it presently appears. Samadhi is conscious realization of the Real Condition of the present moment. Such samadhi is open-eyed, natural, coincident with all events that arise. Samadhi is stable, non-dependent, conscious intuition of the Real Condition of the present event. It is not independent of a happy, easeful, pleasurable human life founded in the Law of Sacrifice through love.

Life is samadhi, but it is conceived as dilemma by the usual man, and dramatized as problem-solution, the search toward goals of release. When it is consciously and radically realized as samadhi and lived as such, life is self-purifying, self-releasing, not binding in any sense, and the Real Principle or Consciousness is no longer bound by events. In that case, all binding tendencies fall away spontaneously, since they depend on dilemma and seeking. Such a one lives freely, happily, with ease, and also with intensity of being. He is free of all destiny, even while apparent destiny or life continues to arise in his own case. Because he is not bound to dis-ease, the Conscious Force of Reality becomes the present mover of his appearance, and he is even drawn into sublime forms, after passing from this present life, without any strategic intention of ego, mind, or desire. His destiny may not be described, since it is not other than the Real Condition, but that Destiny is not annihilation. It is coincident with the Play of all kinds of worlds.

This is the happy assertion of Bubba Free John. This is the realization he serves in the theatre of his play among friends. Those who come to him are bound to a karmic intention, founded in dilemma and the search for release. They dramatize this search via the subjective manipulation of ego, mind, and desire. Such is the play of Narcissus, the complex avoidance of relationship. The drama of each life is unique, ap-

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

pearing through a cycle of strategies that ritually controls the events of life.

Therefore, the way Bubba Free John Teaches is to confront his friends with his argument, both in the form of a theatre of conditions and circumstances and the instructive lessons he gives by means of speech. All this becomes natural reflection or non-strategic self-observation and insight in those who yield their lives to him in the stable, unqualified sacrifice of attention, intelligence, and love.

This way is happy, most human, not world-denying, not fascinating, but simple and full.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

FOOTNOTES

PART ONE: Live With Me

1. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?" an unpublished talk to the Ashram, January 29, 1976.

2. Bubba Free John, *The Method of the Siddhas* (Los Angeles: The Dawn Horse Press, 1973), pages 324-325.

3. Bubba Free John, compiled from talks to the Ashram in November and December, 1973.

4. Bubba Free John, "Lay It at My Feet," *The Dawn Horse*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (December, 1975), pages 11-15.

5. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, November 14, 1975.

6. Bubba Free John, "The Grace of Suffering," an unpublished talk to the Ashram, January 18, 1976.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. Bubba Free John, "Study, Enquiry, and Satsang." an unpublished talk given to the Ashram, November 15, 1973.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Bubba Free John, "God, Guru, and Grace," an unpublished talk given to the Ashram, December 3, 1975.

12. Bubba Free John, "Frogs and Walls," *The Dawn Horse*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (November, 1975), page 4.

13. Bubba Free John, "That's Magic," a talk given to the Ashram, October 11, 1975.

14. Bubba Free John, "The Way I Teach," *The Dawn Horse #5*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1975), back cover.

15. Bubba Free John, "Divine Distraction," an unpublished talk given to the Ashram, December 16, 1975.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Bubba Free John, "The Bhakti Cult," an unpublished talk given to the Ashram, October 29, 1974.

18. *Ibid.*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

19. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, November 29, 1975.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Bubba Free John, *Garbage and the Goddess* (Lower Lake, Ca.: The Dawn Horse Press, 1974), pages xii-xiii.

22. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, June 7, 1974.

23. Bubba Free John, "This Siddhi Will Be Radiant," *The Dawn Horse*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January, 1975), pages 33-35.

24. Bubba Free John, "Don't Waste Any Time," a talk given to the Ashram, January 11, 1976.

25. Bubba Free John, "God, Guru, and Grace.

26. Bubba Free John, *The Method of the Siddhas*, page 314.

PART TWO: The Way of Divine Communion

1. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, January 15, 1976.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Bubba Free John, "Real God," a talk to the Ashram, January 11, 1975.

4. Bubba Free John, "Guru as Prophet," *The Dawn Horse*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975), pages 40-41.

5. Bubba Free John, "The Grace of Suffering," a talk to the Ashram, January 18, 1976.

6. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?", a talk to the Ashram, January 29, 1976.

7. Bubba's written instructions, January 15, 1976.

8. Bubba Free John, *Garbage and the Goddess*, (Lower Lake, Ca.: The Dawn Horse Press, 1974), page 138.

9. Bubba Free John, "Two Ways of Approach," a talk to the Ashram, December 3, 1975.

10. Bubba's written instructions, January 15, 1976.

11. Franklin Jones (Bubba Free John), *The Method of the Siddhas*, (Los Angeles: The Dawn Horse Press, 1973), page 65.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

12. Bubba Free John, "I Prefer to Be Free," a talk to the Ashram, January 20, 1975.

13. Bubba Free John, "Gnosis," a talk to the Ashram, November 26, 1974.

14. Bubba Free John, "Early Morning 4:00 A.M.," a talk to the Ashram, December 22, 1974.

15. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?"

16. *Ibid.*

17. Bubba Free John, *The Method of the Siddhas*, page 58.

18. *Ibid.*, pages 321-322.

19. Bubba Free John, *Garbage and the Goddess*, page 375.

20. Bubba Free John, "Guru Day," a talk to the Ashram, July 15, 1973.

21. Bubba Free John, *The Method of the Siddhas*, page 340.

22. Bubba Free John, "Let Me Live You," a talk to the Ashram, April 25, 1974.

23. Bubba Free John, "The End of Reflection," a talk to the Ashram, February 2, 1976.

24. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?"

25. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, January 15, 1976.

26. Bubba Free John, "The Grace of Suffering."

27. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, November 28, 1975.

28. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, January 15, 1976 and February 6, 1976.

29. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?"

30. Bubba Free John, "The Graceful Process," *The Dawn Horse* #6, Vol. 2, No. 4, (1975), page 47.

PART THREE: The Way of Understanding

1. Bubba Free John, "Enquiry," a talk to the Ashram, July 28, 1975.

2. Bubba's written instructions to the Ashram, January 15, 1976.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

3. Bubba Free John, "The Grace of Suffering," a talk to the Ashram, January 18, 1976.

4. Bubba's written instructions, November 28, 1975.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Bubba's written instructions, November 20, 1975.

7. Bubba's written instructions, November 14, 1975.

8. Bubba's written instructions, November 28, 1975.

9. Bubba Free John, "Hidden Plumbing," a talk to the Ashram, April 14, 1975.

10. Bubba Free John, "My Company," a talk to the Ashram, June 28, 1975.

11. Bubba Free John, "Hidden Plumbing."

12. Bubba's written instructions, November 10, 1975.

13. Bubba Free John, "Guru as Prophet," *The Dawn Horse*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975), page 38.

14. Bubba Free John, "Divine Distraction," a talk to the Ashram, December 16, 1975.

15. For a complete discussion of vital shock, please see "Vital Shock," *The Method of the Siddhas*, (Los Angeles: The Dawn Horse Press, 1973), pages 94-124.

16. Bubba Free John, *The Method of the Siddhas*, page 77.

17. Bubba Free John, "Peculiars and Solids Revisited," a talk to the Ashram, December 10, 1974.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. Bubba Free John, "Solids and Peculiars," a talk to the Ashram, November 30, 1974.

21. Bubba Free John, "Peculiar and Solid," a talk to the Ashram, June 30, 1974.

22. Bubba Free John, "Peculiars and Solids Revisited."

23. *Ibid.*

24. Bubba Free John, "Peculiar and Solid."

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

25. Bubba Free John, "Peculiars and Solids Revisited."

26. Bubba's written instructions, April 5, 1975.

27. Bubba Free John, "Peculiars and Solids Revisited."

28. Bubba Free John, "Time Together," a talk to the Ashram, October 25, 1975.

29. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?" a talk to the Ashram, January 29, 1976.

30. Bubba Free John, "The Graceful Process," *The Dawn Horse* #6, Vol. 2, No. 4, (1975), pages 45-46.

31. Expanded from Bubba's written instructions, April 4, 1975.

32. Bubba's written instructions, November 28, 1975.

33. Bubba Free John, "The End of Reflection," a talk to the Ashram, February 2, 1976.

34. Bubba Free John, "Becoming Human," a talk to the Ashram, December 17, 1974.

35. Bubba Free John, "I'm Always Talking about the Same Thing," a talk to the Ashram, May 18, 1975.

36. Bubba Free John, *The Method of the Siddhas*, page 128.

37. Bubba Free John, "Have I Said It?"

38. Bubba Free John, *Garbage and the Goddess*, (Lower Lake, Ca.: The Dawn Horse Press, 1975), page 27.

39. Bubba Free John, "The True Yogi Is a Dangerous Man," *The Dawn Horse*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975), inside front cover.

PART FOUR: Three Stages of God-Realization

1. Bubba Free John, "Another Talk," a talk to the Ashram, February 3, 1976.

2. *Ibid.*

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

the "no remedy" course

an orientation to the disciplines and culture of life in The Dawn Horse Communion

Through the conditions of ordinary life and service, each person develops a profound and ecstatic relationship to Bubba Free John. The NO REMEDY Course is the first formal way to approach that relationship, since it provides an opportunity to consider and discuss the demands of life in his Company. The seminars are led by mature members from the community and are intended to reveal something of the intensity of life in The Dawn Horse Communion.

People living far away can take the course by mail (through our Correspondence Department), but we recommend, if it is at all possible, that it be taken in San Francisco so that you can spend two weekends at Persimmon, sitting with Bubba, and enjoying personal contact with members of the Community. Prior to taking the course you are required to read Bubba's four major books:

The Knee of Listening
The Method of the Siddhas
Garbage and the Goddess
No Remedy

The cost of the seminars is $75.00, which covers your stay at Persimmon, seminars in San Francisco, the study guide, and tape recordings.

The cost of the correspondence course is $16.00, which covers the study guide and recorded excerpts from Bubba's talks.

Seminar information: THE DAWN HORSE COMMUNION, 1443 Polk Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94109

Correspondent information: THE DAWN HORSE COMMUNION, Attn: Correspondence Dept., Star Route 2, Middletown, Ca. 95461

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

There is only one way to be 'saved' and that is to love God to the point of absolute distraction.

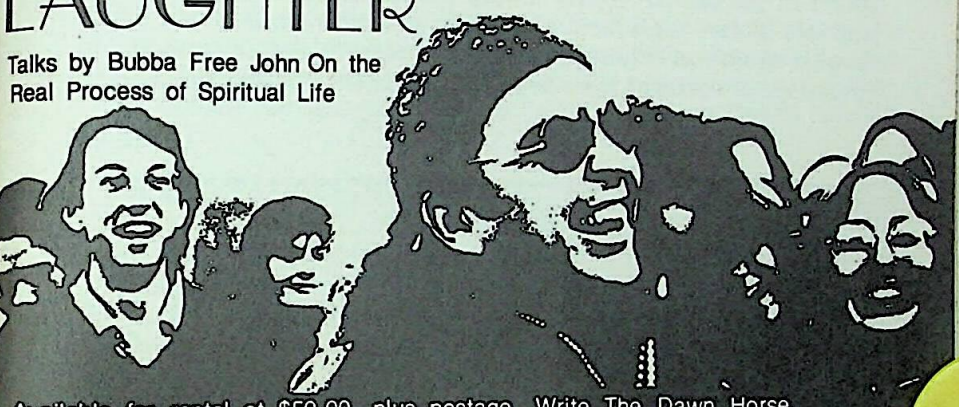
Bubba Free John

An extraordinary one-hour, full color film of excerpts from recent talks given by Bubba to his community of devotees.

Bubba humorously undermines the myths of spiritual life with the force of his argument. *There is only God.* This is the ecstatic premise of Bubba's teaching and the primary communication of his Presence. In *Laughter,* Bubba describes the process in which the suffering and limitations of men are gracefully dissolved in Truth.

LAUGHTER

Talks by Bubba Free John On the Real Process of Spiritual Life



Available for rental at $50.00, plus postage. Write The Dawn Horse Communion, Dept. NR-1, Star Route 2, Middletown, California 95461.

THE DAWN HORSE

The Dawn Horse is a lively, incisive, and often controversial monthly magazine devoted primarily to the radical spiritual teachings of Bubba Free John. Each month **The Dawn Horse** features selections from Bubba's most important unpublished talks and writings and articles on the demonstration of his teaching in the lives of devotees, and serves as a continuing chronicle of the development of the community.

As a primary instrument for the communication of Bubba's teaching, it is an invaluable publication for anyone interested in his work or in spiritual life in general.

$6 for a one year subscription (12 issues)

Order from: The Dawn Horse Communion, Star Route 2, Middletown, California 95461.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

RECORDED TALKS OF

THE GORILLA SERMON and Other Talks on the Radical Nature of Spiritual Life:

A handsome two-record set of excerpts from Bubba's most powerful talks. In these talks Bubba discourses on various aspects of the spiritual process, including the Master-disciple relationship, the failure of the search, reincarnation, the necessity of the Guru, the wildness of real yogis, and death. The second record of the set is devoted entirely to "Garbage and the Goddess," Bubba's famous and uproarious criticism of the search for fulfillment through experience.

$5.98

CASSETTE TAPES

THE THREE DHARMAS and **IT'S BETTER TO BE HAPPY THAN CONCERNED** $5.95

"The Three Dharmas" is Bubba's historical statement of the position of the path of Understanding in relation to the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, and Krishna. "It's Better to Be Happy than Concerned" is a convincing rebuttal to the traditional notion that spiritual sadhana must be a solemn, humorless affair full of self-obsession and attention to internal states.

THE AVON LADY $4.95

With hilarious parody, Bubba talks about the approach of most seekers to spiritual life and explains how the true Guru undermines the impulse for fascination in his disciples, thus waking them to the Divine Condition.

GURU AS PROPHET $4.95

A lucid exposition of the role of the true Guru in the world, the outspokenly critical function of the teacher/prophet in relation to the conventional society of men.

THE COSMOS $4.95

An eminent talk on the profound process of Reality from the point of view of one who lives it.

GARBAGE AND THE GODDESS $4.95

Bubba's famous talk on the futility of fulfillment through experience, even the seemingly sublime experience of the yogi.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

BUBBA FREE JOHN

GURU, FAITH, AND SATSANG $5.95

A full discussion of the Guru-disciple relationship and real faith—faith in which the search is undone and the individual assumes Divine Consciousness as the principle of his life.

THE GORILLA SERMON $4.95

The "gorilla" of this title is death. Bubba talks beautifully and humorously of its pervasive influence on our lives and the possibility of its transcendence in consciousness. (This is the full length talk, only eleven minutes of which are included in **The Gorilla Sermon** album.)

THE SATURDAY NIGHT MASSACRE $4.95

This landmark talk deals strongly with cultic and separative tendencies inherent in all human relationships from couples to civilizations, and speaks of the real opportunity for a new human history to begin.

WALKING THE DOG $4.95

A talk on the life of Divine humor as opposed to the "insane" approach to life taken by most men, an approach which completely denies the Divine and dwells only in the gross levels of existence.

FROGS AND WALLS $4.95

An unusual talk about the omnipotence of Satsang in which Bubba describes how the **Siddhi** of the true Guru is available to not only humans, but all beings and things—even frogs and walls.

RADICAL CONVERSION: I ONLY MOVE WHERE THERE IS FIRE $4.95

Men must turn from the principle of their ordinary lives. In radical conversion, a man falls into a prior unity with the Divine state, and from that point of view everything is free, simple, and unreasonably happy.

SEX, LAUGHTER, AND GOD-REALIZATION $4.95

Bubba criticizes the usual man's involvement with his own subjectivity and his assumption of separation from God, and he explains sex, laughter, and God-Realization as the three fundamental disturbances. "If there is no humor, no fullness of life, no joy . . . there is no God-Realization."

Available from: The Dawn Horse Communion, Star Route 2, Middletown, California 95461. Please add $.50 for postage and handling for each shipment. California residents add 6% sales tax.

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

"It is obvious from all sorts of subtle details, that he knows what IT's all about. . . . One who knows he is the Godhead from the beginning doesn't have to use any kind of force to be that . . . a rare being. . . .

"It looks like we have an Avatar here. I have waited for such a One all my life."

—Alan Watts

THE KNEE OF LISTENING:
The Early Life and Radical Spiritual Teachings of Bubba Free John (Franklin Jones) $3.95

THE METHOD OF THE SIDDHAS:
Talks with Bubba Free John (Franklin Jones) on the Spiritual Techniques of the Saviors of Mankind $3.95

GARBAGE AND THE GODDESS:
The Last Miracles and Final Spiritual Instructions of Bubba Free John $4.95

CONSCIOUS EXERCISE AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL SUN:
Principles and Routines of Daily Exercise Practiced by Members of The Dawn Horse Communion $1.95

THE EATING GORILLA COMES IN PEACE:
The Natural, Integrated Approach to Diet and Health Practiced by the World's Great Traditional Cultures as Applied by the Spiritual Community of Bubba Free John $3.95

THE BOOKS OF BUBBA FREE JOHN

Available from
local bookstores or from
The Dawn Horse Communion,
Star Route 2, Middletown,
California 95451.

CC0. Public

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

Digitization by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust. Funding by MoE-IKS

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi

There exists a great possibility for all of us, in which the adventure of suffering comes to an end and only God or the Divine Reality is known. As you will discover in this book, it is not necessary or even useful for you to become "pure" or "holy." There is literally *no remedy*, no action you can perform, spiritual or worldly, that can bring an end to your suffering and sense of limitation. It is far better and wiser to live in direct relationship to the Divine. Such a way begins and goes on forever in the happiness of God, and that is exactly what life in the Company of Bubba Free John is all about.

From the most ancient times a profoundly simple way of life has been communicated by the Siddhas, the God-Realized. That way is simply to stay and live in their company. No kind of inward process, not even any special instruction is necessary. If you will simply stay in the Guru's Presence, serve the Guru, contemplate the Guru, lead a simple sacrificial life relative to the Guru in his obviously present, physical, human appearance, then all the dimensions of God-Realization will proceed from that practice. Whenever the Siddhas speak, they say, "Don't try to take anything from me to do for yourself. Simply bring yourself into my Company and stay there. Simply rest your attention on me, sacrifice yourself to me, sit in my physical presence, live in my ordinary company, yield to me everything you experience in my company, and I will show you my Truth."

—Bubba Free John

THE DAWN HORSE PRESS

In U.S. $3.95

CC0. In Public Domain. Sri Sri Anandamayee Ashram Collection, Varanasi